

Authoritative Texts and Reception History

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Authoritative Texts and Reception History

Aspects and Approaches

Edited by

Dan Batovici
Kristin De Troyer



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Contents

Introduction 1

Dan Batovici

PART 1

Old Testament / Hebrew Bible

The Bible and the Crocodile: An Exercise in Balancing Translation Technique and Text-Critical Data 11

Kristin De Troyer

Reading the Septuagint: The Hermeneutical Problem of a Translated Text 20

Benjamin J.M. Johnson

The Not Not-Inglorious Death of Samson 41

Kerry Lee

No Gods Made with Hands: Pauline Idol Polemics 52

Rebekah M. Devine

PART 2

Pseudepigrapha & Dead Sea Scrolls

Quotations from Lost Books in the Hebrew Bible: A New Translation and Introduction 65

James R. Davila

The Reception of Isa 40:15 in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, 2 *Baruch*, and 4 *Ezra* 94

Albertina Oegema

After the Order of Melchizedek: Royal Themes and Melchizedek Traditions Applied to Jesus by the Author of Hebrews 112

David J. Larsen

The Reception of the Jobraham Narratives in Jewish Thought	124
<i>Nicholas Ellis</i>	

Jesus and the Jewish Diviner: The Use and Misuse of 4Q242	141
<i>Beniamin Pascut</i>	

PART 3

New Testament

Scripture and God's Authority: Case Studies and Further Questions	157
<i>N.T. Wright</i>	

Elective Affinity: Second Peter's Reception of Paul	167
<i>Martin G. Ruf</i>	

<i>Poiesis, Aesthesis, and Catharsis: The Aesthetic Experience of Reading "the Day of the Lord" with the Fathers</i>	184
<i>Andrew Talbert</i>	

The Reception of Paul's Understanding of Resurrection and Eschatology in the Epistle to Rheginos: Faithful Paulinism, or Further Development?	199
<i>Frederik S. Mulder</i>	

Nicetas of Heraclea's Catena on John's Gospel: How Many Manuscripts are There?	216
<i>Michael A. Clark</i>	

PART 4

Early Christianity

The Promise and Threat of "Reception", with Reference to Patristic Interpretation of Texts in Hebrews and Ephesians	227
<i>Mark W. Elliott</i>	

Between Ritual and Moral Purity: Early Christian Views on Dietary Laws	243
<i>Moshe Blidstein</i>	

The Greek Patristic Reception of the Sibylline Oracles	260
<i>Madalina Toca</i>	
The Early Christian Martyrdom Narratives: Narrative Features, Intertextuality and the Authoritative Texts Behind	278
<i>Marijana Vuković</i>	
The Ascension Spectacle: Lukan Narrative in Its Reception	296
<i>Justin A. Mihoc</i>	
Augustine's <i>Enarrationes</i> and the Final Form of the Psalter	310
<i>Kevin Haley</i>	
Epilogue: Future Prospects in Reception History	320
<i>Dan Batovici</i>	
Index of Sources	329

Introduction

Dan Batovici

In some respects, any perusal of a text is an event within a possible reception history of the perused text. At the other end, any reception history is on some level an account of the authority of the received text. The debut of the concept of ‘reception history’ is notoriously associated with the name of Hans-Georg Gadamer,¹ yet the less than ten pages dealing with *Wirkungsgeschichte* in *Truth and Method* do not aim to produce a new methodology. And, as far as the genealogy of such a concept is concerned, Gadamer notes that reception history, regarded as a supplement to historical enquiry—as is the general use today, since for instance the *Blackwell Bible Commentaries* are not meant to replace the usual commentaries of the biblical texts commented upon in this series—was not something new.² What he holds as new is the requirement that every time “a work of art or an aspect of the tradition” is brought under scrutiny, the history of effect on the historical act itself should be taken into account. Gadamer’s *Wirkungsgeschichte* concerns itself thus with the “historical consciousness” of the historian, given that “understanding is, essentially, a historical effected event;” as such, this requirement is “addressed not to research, but to its methodological consciousness.”³

Despite Gadamer’s intention, however, ‘reception history’ has eventually emerged as a domain of research, entertaining a notable methodological diversity.⁴ Indeed, the raise of the field of reception history in the last decade is made

1 Hans-Georg Gadamer, “The principle of history of effect (*Wirkungsgeschichte*),” pages 299–306 in *Truth and Method* (London, New York: Continuum, 2004), translation by J. Weinsheimer and D.G. Marshall.

2 H.G. Gadamer, ‘History of effect’, 299, where the names of Herman Friedrich Grimm and Friedrich Gundolf are mentioned.

3 Both quotations are from H.G. Gadamer, ‘History of effect’, 299. See further Mark Knight, ‘*Wirkungsgeschichte*, Reception History, Reception Theory,’ *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33.2 (2010), 137–146, esp. 137–139, and Martin O’Kane, ‘*Wirkungsgeschichte* and Visual Exegesis: The Contribution of Hans-Georg Gadamer,’ *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33.2 (2010), 147–159.

4 On this methodological diversity and the problems see the excellent thematic issue of the *Journal for the Study of the New Testament*—33.2 (2010)—which includes M. Knight ‘*Wirkungsgeschichte*, Reception History, Reception Theory,’ 137–146; William John Lyons, ‘Hope for a Troubled Discipline? Contributions to New Testament Studies from Reception History,’ 207–220; Mark W. Elliott, ‘Effective-History and the Hermeneutics of Ulrich Luz,’ 161–173;

obvious, beyond a multitude of monographs and articles tackling reception issues, by the foundation of no less than three peer reviewed journals (*Biblical Reception*, *Studies in Religion and Reception*, *Journal of the Bible and its Reception*), three prominent book series (the *Blackwell Bible Commentaries* with ten volumes published since 2003, IVP's *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* with twenty nine volumes since 2001, and Eerdmans' *The Church's Bible* with four volumes since 2003), a multivolume *Encyclopaedia of Biblical Reception* (De Gruyter, with ten volumes since 2009), and by the publication in 2011 of *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible*.⁵

What these and many other reception-historical projects—the names of Hans Robert Jauss⁶ and Ulrich Luz⁷ are among the first to come to mind—have in common is the fact that they assess mostly the effective history of the Bible, and usually apply the notion of 'reception history' to either (books from) the Old Testament, or (books from) the New Testament and their presence, influence or interpretation for a number of centuries. All the while, studies with a broader perspective, who offer in parallel various instances for biblical as well as non-biblical texts, are rather rare. It is therefore the aim and the specificity of the present volume to offer a collection of essays that discuss various reception-historical issues across several corpora, from a plurality of perspectives. It is hoped that the diversity of the themes and texts presented here will encourage future research to go beyond the frontiers of our fields (e.g. OT, NT) in order to apply questions of reception that were productive in one field to another, and for the purpose of meaningful comparisons.

With one exception, earlier versions of the articles in this volume were presented at the first St Andrews Conference in Biblical and Early Christian Studies, which took place at St Mary's College, School of Divinity, University

David B. Gowler, 'Socio-Rhetorical Interpretation: Texture of a Text and its Reception,' 191–206; Robert Morgan, 'Sachkritick in Reception History,' 175–190. Martin O'Kane, 'Wirkungsgeschichte and Visual Exegesis: The Contribution of Hans-Georg Gadamer,' 147–159.

5 Michael Lieb, Ema Mason, Jonathan Roberts and Christopher Rowland (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Reception History of the Bible* (Oxford: OUP, 2011).

6 Hans Robert Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, ed. Wlad Godzich and Jochen Schulte-Sasse, *Theory and History of Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982). On Jauss, see Andrew Talbert's essay in this volume.

7 Ulrich Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (EKK 1/1–4; Zürich: Benziger Verlag; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1985–2002), translated as *Matthew: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; 3 vols.; Minneapolis: Augsburg-Fortress, 1992, 2001, 2005). For a recent assessment see Mark W. Elliott, 'Effective-History and the Hermeneutics of Ulrich Luz,' *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 33.2 (2010), 161–173.

of St Andrews, 15–16 June 2011. Although other associations could be imagined, the contributions are grouped here in four chapters—Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, Pseudepigrapha & Dead Sea Scrolls, New Testament, and Early Christianity—in order to showcase that each of these corpora invite rather diverse directions of reception. To briefly illustrate, the articles in the *Hebrew Bible/Old Testament* chapter research the reception of the text of the HB in its subsequent versions (De Troyer, Johnson), the contrast between a rather benevolent reception and the initial rather negative connotation of a given theme (Lee), and the reception of a HB concept in the LXX, the Ancient Near East and then in Paul (Devine).

In the *Pseudepigrapha* chapter, the focus is respectively on the lost sources of the Hebrew Bible (Davila), Pseudepigraphic traditions used in the New Testament (Larsen), Hebrew Bible / Old Testament reception in Pseudepigraphic texts (Oegema) and in Rabbinic literature and the New Testament (Ellis), as well as Dead Sea Scroll motives reception in the New Testament (Pascut). The *New Testament* chapter features articles on the re-reading of Scripture in the earliest Christianity (Wright), New Testament reception into the New Testament (Ruf), Patristic reception of New Testament themes (Talbert), New Testament reception in Nag Hammadi (Mulder), and the reception of the New Testament in commentary manuscripts as catenae (Clark).

Finally, the *Early Christianity* chapter contains illustrations of the New Testament reception history into Early Christianity (Elliot, Mihoc), Jewish traditions in Early Christianity (Blidstein), Old Testament reception in Patristics (Haley), and, beyond the New Testament, the reception history of Early Christian traditions in forthcoming centuries (Vuković) and the Patristic reception of a Hellenistic-Jewish-Christian pseudepigraphon (Toca). The following offers summaries of the contributions included in this volume.

Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

In her essay, Kristin De Troyer assesses a peculiar difference between the Old Hebrew and the Old Greek text of Lev 11:29, from the perspective of textual criticism, the problem being that the latter seems to speak of a land crocodile, while the former of a certain lizard, albeit a big one. De Troyer's proposed solution reflects a discrete act of reception of the Hebrew text in one of its versions, in that she argues that the difference is best accounted for when regarded as an interpretative rendering on the part of the translator, instead of the use of a different *Vorlage*, perhaps with the aim of rendering explicit what in Hebrew was seemingly kept implicit.

Benjamin J.M. Johnson approaches the LXX—beyond its ancillary relevance for other disciplines such as textual criticism—as an important document “with its own distinct *Wirkungsgeschichte*,” in that it is an “example of how at least some early Jews received and represented their sacred scriptures into Greek.” Johnson surveys recent approaches to the LXX as a translated text—discussing the following projects: *La Bible d’Alexandrie*, NETS, and *Septuaginta Deutsch*—and argues that LXX should be regarded “as its own communicative act, as a text that is both a translation and a literary text in its own right,” following a detailed analysis of LXX relation to the Hebrew text in 1 Reigns 16:1–13.

In his contribution, Kerry Lee contrasts the rather benevolent reception of Samson and of his death with what he identifies as a negative depiction of his death in the Book of Judges. He argues that the narrator understands the death of Samson not as glorious, but as the point where Israel and Yahweh part ways, where Yahweh is victorious but Samson is not, and where the effectiveness of the “Judge” leadership model comes to an end. In doing that, Lee shows that a character’s death in battle in the Hebrew Bible does not carry the sort of connotations one might expect: it is dishonourable, not honourable, to die in battle. While this contrasts with the Greek and later Jewish attitudes, it finds confirmation in ancient Mesopotamian texts.

Rebekah Devine argues that in the LXX (ἄ)χειροποίητος, used to translate words associated with idolatry and image-making, is a theologically loaded term with polemical connotations, evoking memories of Israel’s exile and enslavement to idols. This is then proposed as a background to explain the Pauline reception of such vocabulary and its use in the polemical context related to circumcision to suggest that the circumcision of Gentile Jesus-followers would constitute a reversion to the pagan worship they embraced prior to knowing God.

Pseudepigrapha & Dead Sea Scrolls

James R. Davila’s paper discusses and offers a collection of the quotations from and references to lost Old Testament Pseudepigrapha which appear in various Hebrew Bible books, which time and again refer to lost songs collections, historical chronicles, and priestly and prophetic works.

Albertina Oegema proposes an assessment of the reception of Isa 40:15—where nations are compared with a drop from a jar and with spittle—in 4 *Ezra*, 2 *Baruch* and Pseudo-Philo’s *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*. The interpretations in these texts are shown to differ from the meaning of Isa 40:15 in its immediate

context, and also from one another. Further discussion is then offered concerning the similarities and differences in the reception of Isa 40:15 in these three texts against the background of discussions concerning their apparent interrelationship.

David Larsen's contribution explores royal themes and Melchizedek traditions used by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews in presenting the priesthood of Jesus. Larsen scrutinizes a number of ancient traditions—2 Enoch, Josephus, Philo, Qumran texts—in whose line the Christians could have made the connection between Jesus and Mechizedec, as does the author of Hebrews. The Christians would have understood the ancient priest-kings “after the order of Mekchizedek” as messiahs, “anointed ones,” in fact types of the long-awaited Messiah, came from Heaven to restore and renew.

Nicholas Ellis explores the reception of the traditions of Job and Abraham, in particular a widespread phenomenon where the Job and Abraham narratives demonstrate a mutual influence and assimilation of elements from the other's stories. Ellis coins the term “Jobraham” to describe the resulting reworked narrative, and examines how this becomes a hermeneutical touchstone for ancient explanation of biblical testing and temptation. After summarizing the range of such assimilated traditions, Ellis then examines a possible example where this tradition may have influenced the author of the New Testament Epistle of James.

The essay authored by Benjamin Pascut investigates a possible parallel between the Prayer of Nabonidus from cave 4 of the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q242) and the synoptic miracle story of the healing of the paralytic (Mk 2:1–12/Mt 9:1–8/Lk 5:17–26). Pascut argues that, although 4Q242 and Mk 2:1–12 are grounded in a shared worldview, nonetheless a close parallel between the two is difficult to sustain, with the consequence that “4Q242 is of little use and should no longer be a desideratum in future expositions of Mark 2:1–12.”

New Testament

N.T. Wright's paper focuses on a particular moment of Scriptural reception: “the moment when those first-century Jews who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was Israel's Messiah and the world's Lord began to re-read their scriptures with this belief as the controlling filter.” This contribution summarizes the main argument of the author's 2010 book, *Scripture and the Authority of God*, and applies it to the moment in question, with the Sabbath and Monogamy as test cases.

Martin G. Ruf scrutinizes 2 Peter's reception of Paul, and starts by outlining the attitude of 2 Peter towards Paul and his letters. Ruf shows that, even though

it does not quote Paul verbatim, 2Peter does present in a very free manner Pauline ideas and phrases; furthermore, it does so without prejudicing the authoritative status of source texts, as the acceptance of the authoritative status of Paul's letters brings about patterns of imitation. The reception of the letters of Paul here is thus marked by imitation, but also by emulation, as its message is directed not only toward a given church, but toward all people of the same faith.

Utilising the hermeneutical methodology of *Rezeptionsästhetik* as developed by H.R. Jauss, Andrew Talbert explores the interpretation of 2 Thessalonians 1:6–10 in the early Church. After a presentation of Jauss' theory of reception in terms of aesthetically perceptive reading, retrospectively interpretative reading, and historical reading, Talbert describes 2 Thess 1:6–10 as an aesthetic experience. He then turns to the history of interpretation of this text—in Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Augustine—in an attempt to disclose the aesthetic value of historical readings of 2 Thess 1:6–10.

Frederik Mulder's contribution discusses the reception of Paul's views on the resurrection body and eschatology in the Epistle to Rheginos of the Nag Hammadi findings. The question being whether the author of the latter follows Paul closely or departs from him, Mulder argues that although the evidence "would suggest that Rheginos does present use with a highly skilful articulation of important Pauline themes," he nonetheless "has moved beyond what Paul would have allowed for," with regard to how the resurrection body and eschatology is envisaged.

Michael A. Clark tackles on an understudied branch of New Testament textual criticism, namely the NT reception in catenae—commentary manuscripts consisting of biblical text and commentary drawn from various early Christian writers—focusing on the one compiled by Nicetas of Heraclea in the eleventh century for the Gospel of John. There are ten manuscripts ascribed to this work, and Clark undertakes to examine and compare them in order to determine which of them actually contain Nicetas' catena of John, the result being that seven of them do, in one form or another.

Early Christianity

Mark W. Elliott offers an account of patristic reception analysis, by looking at two key New Testament texts—Eph 1:10 and Heb 2:5–9—and their interpretation over the first Christian centuries. With regard to the former, for instance, Elliott finds that 'the biblical Paul of Eph 1:10 is more cosmic', whilst Irenaeus is more 'moral' and 'actualising to the extent of being *hyper-Pauline*'. This and the reminder of the data discussed serve to show that "as early as Irenaeus

theologian-exegetes were keen to channel Scripture to serve in the fight against their opponents,” manifesting the usefulness of the Scripture in the mind of patristic authors “in bending the biblical text into a useful shape for the sake of application.”

Moshe Blidstein discusses early Christian reception of biblical dietary laws, and shows that “the patristic view is that negative or positive status given to food is a result of the human disposition towards it,” in an effort to “find a moral way of thinking about defilement which did not clash with their worldview.” Blidstein argues that this is “an attempt to maintain the system of hierarchies created by traditional food distinctions while using a new moral language which accords with the cosmological and anthropological outlook of the new religion.”

In an invited contribution, Madalina Toca examines the reception of the Sibylline Oracles in the works of a number of Greek Patristic authors before the fifth century—Justin Martyr, Athenagoras of Athens, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, and Pseudo-Justin—tracing the way in which they are used in apologetic contexts. Toca argues that its function is mostly to provide a common ground with a mostly Hellenistic audience, deployed in a mixture of Scriptural, pseudepigraphical, oracular and philosophical arguments.

Marijana Vuković proposes assessment of narrative features and intertextual relations of the martyrdom narratives from the second to the early fourth century, juxtaposed to the narrative features of the narratives after mid-fourth century. She shows that significant narratological and intertextual transformation occurs between the two corpora, and proposes that the discrepancy between them can be accounted for by a switch in literary genre, in which later forms display a tendency to incorporate more freely various other authoritative texts.

Justin Mihoc proposes an analysis of the reception of the Lukan and Johannine accounts of *Ascensio Christi* in the Pre-Niceene church. Mihoc argues for the existence of two distinct interpretative traditions on the matter from an early period, corresponding to the Johannine and Lukan narratives. The former unites the Resurrection with the Ascension in a continuous movement of the glorified Son of God from the grave to the heavens, while the latter depicts a visible Ascension as a separate event from the Resurrection. It is in this vein that the Church affirmed its reality in her Creeds and Confessions of faith.

Kevin Haley concludes the volume with an investigation questioning whether and how Augustine's *Enarrationes* are connected to the canonical shaping and therefore the final form of the book of Psalms. Noting that critical scholars throughout the 20th century acknowledged that many of the psalms of the individual were later reinterpreted to encompass the whole community of

Israel, Haley focuses on the shift between the individual and the community, and on how this affected the reception history of the Psalms in the case of Augustine.

Finally, thanks are due to Elisabeth Tracy and David Larsen, as the conference would not have been possible without their prompt involvement. Many thanks also to Kathleen Burt, John Frederick, Allen Jones and Ryan Mullins, who made sure everything goes smoothly and uninterrupted. Last but not least, thanks are due to Paul Anderson, the editor of the series for his suggestions and comments, and to Liesbeth Hugenholtz and Fem Eggers at Brill for their patience and professionalism.

PART 1

Old Testament / Hebrew Bible



The Bible and the Crocodile: An Exercise in Balancing Translation Technique and Text-Critical Data¹

Kristin De Troyer

In Leviticus 11:29–30, a list is given of animals that swarm upon the earth and that are unclean: the weasel, the mouse, the great lizard according to its kind, the gecko, the land crocodile, the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleons.² This category of animals is the fourth category discussed in chapter 11. In chapter 11 a detailed list is given of those animals that can be eaten and those that can't. The chapter is structured as follows:

1–2a: introduction

2b–23: part 1: guidelines for the distinction between animals that can and can't be eaten

2b–8: land animals

2b–3: animals with divided hoofs and cleft-footed and chewing the cud

4–8: exceptions, which can't be eaten:

camel

rock badger

hare

pig

9–11: animals that live in water

9: everything that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or the streams

¹ A first version of this article was presented at the Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies in 2006. I am grateful for the comments of the participants of the 2006 Collegium lecture and the 2011 first St Andrews Graduate Conference for Biblical and Early Christian Studies.

² In this article, we have followed the NRSV translation: see *Holy Bible, with the Apocryphal / Deuterocanonical Books. New Revised Standard Version*, New York—San Francisco: NCCC—HarperCollins, 1989. The JPS translation has the same list of animals, except that it uses 'mole' instead of 'weasel' for the first animal of 11:29. See *Tanakh. The Holy Scriptures. The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text*, Philadelphia—Jerusalem: The Jewish Publication Society, 1985.

- 10–12: exceptions, which can't be eaten: those that don't have fins and scales (no exceptions mentioned by name)
- 13–19: birds
 - 13a: intro
 - 13b–19: exceptions, which can't be eaten: eagle, vulture, osprey, buzzard, kite, raven, ostrich, nighthawk, seagull, hawk, little owl, cormorant, great owl, water hen, desert owl, carrion vulture, stork, heron, hoopoe, and the bat.
- 20–23: winged insects that walk on all four
 - 20: intro
 - 21: exception, which can be eaten, with specification (those that have jointed legs above their feet)
 - 22: specific list of animals that can be eaten: locust, bald locust, cricket, and grasshopper
 - 23: repetition of main rule for winged insects
- 24–45: part 2: guidelines with regard to carcasses
 - 24–28: rules about the carcasses that render unclean
 - 24–25: general rule and instruction for washing
 - 26: carcasses of animals with divided hoofs, but not cleft-footed or not chew the cud
 - 27: carcasses of all animals that walk on paws, among the animals that walk on all fours
 - 28: repetition of rule and instruction for washing
 - 29–45: carcasses of animals that swarm upon the earth
 - 29a: introduction
 - 29b–30: list of specific animals
 - 31–38: repetition of rule, further specification of 'contact' and further instruction on how to become clean from uncleanness caused by contact with the carcasses of the animals
 - 39–40: specification on what to do in case an animal of which one may eat dies
- 41–45: part 3: continuation of the guidelines for the distinction between animals that can and can't be eaten: swarming animals, that can't be eaten

41–43: repetition of rule

44–45: theological motivation

46–47: concluding and summative remarks regarding land animals, birds and swarming land and water creatures.³

Chapter 11 offers clear instruction on what to eat, more precisely on which animals are clean and which are unclean. There are clean and unclean animals in the categories of land animals, water animals, birds, and winged insects. Chapter 11 then continues with specifying how people can become unclean by touching carcasses of animals. After this section, it seems that part one is continued, namely with instructions on which animals to eat and which not to eat. In this continuation of part one, the animals that swarm upon the earth are discussed. Although in the section of the carcasses of land animals similar distinctions are made as in the case of animals allowed (or not) as food, the category of swarming animals is following a separate and new set of descriptors. The final summary of the chapter picks up all the categories mentioned in chapter 11 of animals that can and can't be eaten and offers conclusions for both part 1 and its continuation in part 3. Indeed, it concludes that this is the law meant to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.

Whereas in a former article I focused on one of the categories of food that could be eaten (the winged insects that walk on all fours and have jointed legs above their feet),⁴ in this article I will focus on one of the animals whose carcass can render a human unclean, namely the crocodile.

In 11:29–30 all in total eight animals are listed. Milgrom writes: “These eight would commonly be found in the kitchen and, being small, might be found inside vessels ...”⁵ The list of animals whose carcass can render a human un-

3 Milgrom distinguishes between vv. 2–23 and vv. 41–45 on the one hand and vv. 24–40 on the other hand—the second block of verses containing orders regarding purification in case of contamination. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (Anchor Bible), New York: Doubleday, 1991, p. 691.

4 Kristin De Troyer, “The Legs and the Wings of the Grasshopper: A Case Study on Changes in the Masoretic Text and in the Old Greek Translation of the Book of Leviticus,” in Hanne vonWeissenberg, Juha Pakkala, & Marko Marttila (eds.), *Changes in Scripture, Rewriting and Interpreting Authoritative Traditions in the Second Temple Period*, Berlin: de Gruyter, 2011, pp. 153–163.

5 Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16* (Anchor Bible), New York: Doubleday, 1991, p. 671.

clean⁶ in Lev 11:29–30 consists of six animals that are nowhere else found in the Hebrew Bible: the weasel, the great lizard, the gecko, the land crocodile, the lizard and the sand lizard are only mentioned in Lev 11:29–30. The Masoretes however only put *circelli* on top of the nouns of 11:30 and jotted five *lameds* in the margin, indicating *hapax legomena*. The nouns of 11:29 are not marked with a *circellus*. The mouse of 11:29 is namely also mentioned in Isaiah 66:17, where people who are eating pigs, vermin and rodents, that is mouse, are condemned to come to an end. Mice also play a role in the story about the capturing of the ark of the covenant by the Philistines, positioning it in the land of Asdod and subsequently returning it to Israel (1Sam 5–6). Moreover, the noun for great lizard הָצֶבֶד has a homonym in Nah 2:8 (הָצֶבֶד it has been fixed, decreed). Finally, חֹלֵד could be seen as a participium active of חָלַד or as defined form of the noun חָלַד (see for the absolute: Job 11:17, Ps 49:2; 89:48).

The chameleon of 11:30 also appears in Deut 14:16, but strangely the context in Deut 14 concerns birds, more specifically those which can't be eaten: the little owl, the big owl, and the water hen. The noun for water hen is the name used in Lev 11:30 for chameleon.

In Lev 11:29–30 there seem to be all rather small animals mentioned, except for the land crocodile in 11:30. Milgrom however, considers all these animals small—in his translation there is no land crocodile, but a spotted lizard in 11:30. BDB explains צֶבֶד as derived from צָבַב which surely points to an animal that clings to the ground⁷—that however does not say anything about its size. Koehler Baumgarten considers צֶבֶד as a “Dornschwanzeidechse” a thorn-tailed lizard, which is a small animal.⁸

In 11:29 the great lizard is further defined: ‘according to its kind.’ The great lizard is the only animal of 11:29–30 that is further characterized: לְמִינֵהוּ. The further description is however used with a masculine singular suffix five times in total in the Book of Leviticus, and all these occur in Lev 11: it is the hawk of any kind (11:16), the locust according to its kind (11:22), the bald locust according to its kind (11:22), the cricket according to its kind (11:22) and then here in 11:29 the great lizard according to its kind. In the Book of Genesis the expression, in

6 Milgrom remarks with regard to ‘impure’: “This term automatically implies that the subsequently listed creatures convey impurity not only by ingestion but also by touch,” see Milgrom, p. 671.

7 F. Brown, S. Driver & C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*, Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2003⁷.

8 Ludwig Koehler & Walter Baumgartner, *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*, Band 2, Leiden: Brill, 1995³. See also its English translation under supervision of M.E.J. Richardson, Leiden: Brill, 1996.

its singular masc. form, is used in 1:12 (2×: plants yielding seeds of every kind, trees bearing fruit of every kind), 21 (birds of every kind), 25 (what creeps on the flour of every kind); 6:20 (2×: birds according to its kind, animals according to its kind) and 7:14 (2×: creeping things and all its kind and birds and all its kind). Finally it is also used in Deut 14:15 (the hawk of any kind). The form with a female singular suffix is used in Gen 1:24 (2×: living creatures of every kind; wild animals of every kind), 25 (wild animals of every kind, cattle of every kind); 6:20 (creeping things on the ground of every kind); 7:14 (2×: wild animal of every kind, domestic animal of every kind); Lev 11:14 (kite of any kind), 19 (heron of every kind); Deut 14:13 (kite of any kind), 18 (heron of every kind); Ezek 47:10 (fish of the great many kind).

The Old Greek text of Leviticus renders the words as follows:

MT	OG
החלד	ἡ γαλῆ
עכבר	ὁ μῦς
הצב	ὁ κροκόδειλος
האנקה	μυγαλῆ
הכח	χαμαιλέων
הלטא	καλαβώτης
החמט	σαύρα
התנשמת	ἀσπάλαξ

It is in this list that the crocodile makes its entry. However, it is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew הצב. That both NRSV and JPS render הכח with land crocodile is maybe a bit misleading; on the other hand, that the latter must have been an animal with strength is suggested by its name. Wevers remarks with regard to the crocodile: “probably some kind of large lizard (?)”.⁹

Wevers has also observed that the “five more unclean crawlers” which follow are all unarticulated—this in contrast to their counterparts in the Hebrew text.¹⁰ Indeed, in the Old Greek text of Leviticus, in contrast to the animals

9 John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus* (SCS, 44), Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997, p. 154.

10 Ibidem.

of v. 29, the animals of v. 30 are listed without a definitive article. The list in Old Greek 11:29–30 should thus read: the weasel, the mouse, the great lizard according to its kind, gecko, land crocodile, lizard, sand lizard, and chameleon.

However, the animals of 11:29–30 are also in Greek rarely attested. Indeed out of the seven animals, five reptiles only appear here. The animals that are only mentioned once in the Old Greek text are however different from the animals that are only mentioned once in the Hebrew text. In the Hebrew text, it was the weasel, the great lizard, the gecko, the land crocodile, the lizard and the sand lizard. In the Old Greek the following are mentioned only once: ἡ γαλῆ, ὁ κροκόδειλος, μυγαλῆ, σαύρα, and ἀσπάλαξ. On the other hand the μῦς, χαμαιλέον and καλαβώτης also appear elsewhere. With regard to the mouse, whereas in the Hebrew text the mice have ravaged the land (1 Sam 6:4–5), the mice in the Old Greek text are already mentioned in the punishment of the Asdodites by God (1 Sam 5:60). The χαμαιλέον is also mentioned in Zeph 2:14, where it seems to be a bird instead of a reptile¹¹ and the καλαβώτης in Prov 30:28, where it is an animal that can be grasped by the hand and found in the palace of the king.

In the most recent English¹² translation of the Septuagint, the animals are translated as follows:

ἡ γαλῆ	weasel
ὁ μῦς	mouse
ὁ κροκόδειλος	dry-land crocodile
μυγαλῆ	field mouse
χαμαιλέον	chameleon
καλαβώτης	gecko
σαύρα	lizard
ἀσπάλαξ	blind rat

In other words, it remains unclear as to what precisely these animals are. Wevers was right: “for both Hebrew and Greek renderings in English are at best approximations.”¹³

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- 11 Note that the translation ‘chameleon’ in both NRSV and JPS are used for another animal.
 - 12 Albert Pietersma & Benjamin G. Wright (eds.), *A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included Under That Title*, Oxford: OUP, 2007.
 - 13 John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus* (SCS, 44), Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997, p. 154.

Interesting however is the further definition of the great lizard. The Hebrew text added 'according to its kind'. The Old Greek however adds: ὁ χερσαῖος. The adjective χερσαῖος used as a noun is also found (in a plural form) in Wisdom 19:19: "for earthly things (χερσαῖα) were turned into watery things." This adjective is clearly not often used in the Septuagint. It certainly is the only case in the Old Greek where it is a rendering of the Hebrew expression למינהו.

למינהו is actually rendered in two ways: in Gen 1:12 (2×), 21, 25; 6:20 (2×); 7:14 (2×) it is translated with κατὰ γένος. The variant with the female suffix is also translated with κατὰ γένος: Gen 1:24 (2×), 25 (2×); 6:20; 7:14 (2×). In Leviticus, there is another Greek expression used. In Lev 11:22 (3×) it is rendered with καὶ τὰ ὅμοια αὐτῶ. Also in Lev 11:14, 16, 19 and Deut 14:13, 18, the rendering is καὶ τὰ ὅμοια αὐτῶ. In other words, the translator of OG Leviticus and OG Deuteronomy was/were¹⁴ using a different expression than the translator of OG Genesis. For some reason, the OG translator of Deuteronomy did not render למינהו in Deut 14:15. In OG Lev 11:16, which is the parallel passage of OG Deut 14:15, the translator qualifies both the sea-gull and the hawk further and adds twice καὶ τὰ ὅμοια αὐτῶ. I wonder whether the translator wanted to re-establish the balance. Whereas two expressions were used in Lev 11:16, none was used in its parallel text in Deut 14:15.

From the analysis it is clear that there are two expressions used to render the same Hebrew expression: κατὰ γένος is the translation in OG Gen and καὶ τὰ ὅμοια αὐτῶ in OG Lev and OG Deut. The only exception to this standard translation technique of the Hebrew expression למינהו in OG Leviticus is OG Lev 11:29. This exception could be explained in two different ways: either the OG translator of Leviticus was able to easily depart from its/their Hebrew parental text or there was slightly different Hebrew *Vorlage* in front of him/her. Already Wevers pointed out that "the translator did on occasion depart from the accepted rules and normal practices of Greek grammar"¹⁵ and that the translator had "a love of variation."¹⁶ These characteristics of the translator and his/her translator could account for the variation in the way the Hebrew expression was rendered. However, the OG translator rendered all the occurrences of the Hebrew expression למינהו with the Greek καὶ τὰ ὅμοια αὐτῶ. Indeed, the OG translator of Leviticus,

14 I have not studied OG Deuteronomy enough to be able to conclude that it was the same translator as OG Leviticus.

15 John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus* (SCS, 44), Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997, p. ix.

16 John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus* (SCS, 44), Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997, p. xi.

although there was some variation in the translation of words and expressions, never opted to not translate the expression. Why then do we have in OG Lev 11:29 ὁ κροκόδειλος ὁ χερσαῖος?

The non-standard rendering of the Hebrew expression by the Old Greek was corrected in the Hexaplaric tradition. In F^a 0-15 b Syh the Old Greek was corrected to resemble the Masoretic text and καὶ τὰ ὅμοια αὐτῷ was added to the text.¹⁷ The resulting text was ὁ κροκόδειλος ὁ χερσαῖος καὶ τὰ ὅμοια αὐτῷ. Origen obviously did not consider ὁ χερσαῖος as the translation of the Hebrew expression יְרֵמִיָּה.

In the apparatus of the Göttingen edition one also reads that the original reading of κροκόδειλος was actually κορκόδ(ε)ῖλος (this reading can be found in A B* F 29-82 500(2^o) 44-107' 56' 134-370 509 121 55* 426).¹⁸ The crocodile was thus originally a corcodile!

This reading is also attested in one of the oldest witnesses to the Old Greek text of Leviticus: the Schøyen MS 2649 (= Ra 830).

On the top of the third page, verso, which is page 64 of the Old Greek Leviticus codex, there are the following lines:¹⁹

	ξδ	
	ἀ]κάθαρτα τῶν ἐρπετων	(cont of Lev 11:29)
	τ]ῶν ἐρπόντων ἐπὶ τῆς	
	γῆς· ἡ γαλῆ καὶ ὁ μῦς	
	καὶ ὁ κορκόδειλος ὁ χερσαῖ	
5	ος, μυγαλῆ καὶ χαμελέ-	Lev 11:30
	ω]ν καὶ καλαβώτης καὶ	
	σ]αύρα καὶ σπάλαγξ'. ταῦ-	Lev 11:31
	τ]α ἀκάθαρτα ὑμεῖν ἀ-	
	πὸ] πάντων τῶν ἐρπε-	
10	τ]ῶν τῶν ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς·	

The crocodile is attested as corcodile. Moreover, the crocodile is also further described as ὁ χερσαῖος. This description thus certainly belongs to the Old Greek

17 See John William Wevers, *Leviticus* (Septuaginta. Vetus Testamentum Graecum auctoritate Academiae Scientiarum Gottingensis editum, Vol. 11, 2), Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1986, ad Lev 11:29.

18 Ibidem.

19 For the edition see: Kristin De Troyer, *Leviticus* (Papyri Graecae Schøyen, PSchøyen 11, ed. Diletta Minutoli & Rosario Pintaudi; Papyrologica Florentina XL/Manuscripts in the Schøyen Collection, Greek Papyri v/111), Firenze: Gonnelli: 2010, pp. 1-68 + Plates I-XVI.

rendering of Lev 11:29. As the solution to this problem is not related to a possible different Hebrew *Vorlage*,²⁰ another look at the context in which the crocodile appears seems necessary.

In Leviticus 11:29–30 animals are listed which are all reptiles. Even if we can't establish precisely which animals are meant, they all seem to be reptiles that live on land: the weasel, the mouse, the gecko, the land crocodile, the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon. Also in the Greek text, the animals are land animals. In order to just confirm that all these animals are land animals, the OG translator of the Book of Leviticus added a further description to the one animal that surely could be seen as also belonging in the water: the crocodile. By adding the description ὁ χερσαῖος the translator, in my opinion, made explicit what was implicit in the Hebrew text, namely that the animals mentioned in Lev 11:29–30 were all reptiles that lived on land, including הַצִּב. That the translator did make explicit what was left implicit in the Hebrew text was already noted by Wevers. He writes: "Often what is clearly implicit in the MT is rendered explicit in LXX."²¹

Moreover as the translator seem to have uphold an economy principle, as visible in the OG Lev 11:15 versus OG Deut 14:15 case, and as there was an additional description given in the Old Greek text which did not have a counterpart in the Hebrew text, namely ὁ χερσαῖος, the Old Greek translator decided not to render the לַמִּינֵהוּ at all.

Conclusion

The crocodile of the Old Greek text of Lev 11:29 is most certainly a land crocodile. That is also, in my opinion, what was intended in the Hebrew text of Leviticus 11:29: the animal in question was most likely a sort of lizard, albeit maybe a rather big one.

The difference between the Old Greek text and the Hebrew is thus not due to a slightly different *Vorlage*, but to the translator who on the one hand rendered explicit what was left implicit in the Hebrew text and on the other hand wanted to keep the amount of text in the translation similar to its parental text.

²⁰ See above.

²¹ John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Leviticus* (SCS, 44), Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1997, p. xiv.

Reading the Septuagint: The Hermeneutical Problem of a Translated Text

Benjamin J.M. Johnson

1 Introduction: The Importance of the Septuagint

The Greek Jewish Scriptures, known generally as the Septuagint (LXX),¹ are an important witness to the early reception of the Hebrew Bible. But how should we, in the twenty-first century, receive and approach these Greek versions of the Jewish Scriptures? We could receive them as an important witness to an early form of the Hebrew Bible, an important cache of early textual variants.² Or, in light of the fact that all translation is to some degree interpretation, and the LXX is no exception, we could receive this version as an interesting and early interpretation of the Hebrew Bible.³ Finally, we could study early Jewish and Christian reception of the LXX and receive it as a foundational document of these early religious communities.⁴ All of these strategies for receiving and approaching the LXX are legitimate and have been fruitfully utilized by scholars. However, this study of the LXX *for the purposes of* textual criticism, understanding ancient Judaism and Christianity, etc., has left it somewhat on

1 Properly speaking, the term Septuagint should refer only to the original translation of the Torah probably sometime in the 3rd century BCE. We will follow the standard practice of using the term Septuagint to refer to the entirety of the Greek Jewish Scriptures that came to be collected together. On the term Septuagint see the helpful survey of Albert C. Sundberg, Jr., “The Septuagint: The Bible of Hellenistic Judaism,” in *The Canon Debate* (ed. L.M. McDonald and J.A. Sanders; Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Pub., 2002), 68–72.

2 See e.g., the discussions in Natalio Fernández Marcos, *The Septuagint in Context: Introduction to the Greek Versions of the Bible* (Boston / Leiden: Brill, 2001), 67–84 and Emanuel Tov, *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (revised and enlarged second edition; JBS 8; Jerusalem: Simor Ltd., 1997).

3 E.g., see Karen H. Jobes and Moisés Silva, *Invitation to the Septuagint* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2000), 93–101; and John William Wevers, “The Interpretative Character and Significance of the Septuagint Version,” in *Hebrew Bible / Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation* (Vol. 1; ed. Magne Sæbø; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996): 84–107.

4 See e.g., Martin Hengel, *The Septuagint as Christian Scripture: Its Prehistory and the Problem of Its Canon* (Grand Rapids, MI: BakerAcademic, 2002); Fernández Marcos, *Septuagint in Context*, 305–362; Jennifer M. Dines, *The Septuagint* (UBW; London and New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 63–79.

the periphery of biblical studies. But the LXX is an important document in its own right,⁵ with its own distinct *Wirkungsgeschichte*. It deserves its day in court. It deserves to be read and interpreted not simply in service to other disciplines but on its own, as we would interpret compositional biblical literature.

The recent translation projects of the *New English Translation of the Septuagint* (NETS), *Septuaginta Deutsch* (LXX.D) and *La Bible d'Alexandrie* (BA) are evidence that the Septuagint is beginning to receive more of its due attention. My interest in this essay is how we, in the twenty-first century, should appropriately and responsibly read and interpret the LXX as a document in its own right. Since the three modern translation projects have begun to probe this methodological question, we will begin by surveying their approaches to the translation of the LXX. We will then propose our preferred method for reading the LXX as its own distinct communicative act. We will conclude by offering an example of this method by giving a reading of 1 Reigns 16:1–13.

It must be noted at the outset that it is not my intention to critique these three translation projects as such. For the purposes of translation, the principles laid out by each project are valid in their own right. In this paper we are examining their usefulness in septuagintal interpretation. That is, we are judging how useful the various existing approaches to the LXX are when carried forward from translation to interpretation.

2 The Nature of the LXX as a Translated Text: Views and Approaches

Let us begin with a very simple fact: the Septuagint is a translated text. This seemingly simple and uncontroversial statement has far reaching implications for how one approaches the study of the LXX. For example, it has sometimes been said that there are two basic ways to approach the LXX: upstream (*amont*) and downstream (*aval*).⁶ In the upstream approach one is most interested in the relationship between the LXX and its Hebrew *Vorlage*, so issues of translation technique and the text-critical value of the LXX come to the fore. In the downstream approach one is more interested in the LXX as it came to be received as “an autonomous work detached from its parent text,”⁷ so that issues

5 Wevers, “Interpretative Character,” 95.

6 Marguerite Harl, “Traduire et Septante en Français: Pourquoi et Comment?” in *La Langue Japhet: Quinze Études sur la Septante et le Grec des Chrétiens* (ed. M. Harl; Paris: Cerf, 1992), 33–42.

7 Harl, “Traduire et Septante,” 36: “oeuvre autonome, détachée de son modèle.”

of the reception of the LXX are emphasized. This metaphor has been utilized to characterize the three modern translation projects of the Septuagint. So that NETS is understood to represent the upstream approach, BA the downstream approach and LXX.D as “on level.”⁸

Though this upstream–downstream metaphor may be useful in depicting the differing angles of approach to the LXX by the three translation projects, it does lend itself toward being a misrepresentation of each.⁹ I suggest that it may be more helpful to use a metaphor borrowed from Paul Ricoeur to differentiate between the world behind the text, the world of the text and the world in front of the text.¹⁰ Though this metaphor has been explicated in different ways, I propose the following: The world *behind the text* can roughly be equated with the historical and referential reality that gave rise to the text. This includes such things as historical referent, historical situation, and authorial (or in our case translational) intent. This is often equated with author-oriented hermeneutics.¹¹ In this world, the priority of interpretive information is found in that which gave rise to the text. The world *of the text* can be equated with the world that is created by the text’s own self-referentiality. This is often equated with structural analysis, or a text-oriented hermeneutic.¹² That is, the priority

8 Helmet Utzschneider, “Auf Augenhöhe mit dem Text: Überlegungen zum wissenschaftlichen Standort einer Übersetzung der Septuaginta ins Deutsche,” in *Im Brennpunkt: Die Septuaginta: Studien zur Entstehung und Bedeutung der griechischen Bible* (BWANT 153; ed. H.-J. Fabry and U. Offerhaus; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2001), 11–50, here, 16–19. He characterized LXX.D as “auf Augenhöhe mit dem Text”—at eye level with the text. Wolfgang Kraus, “Contemporary Translations of the Septuagint: Problems and Perspectives,” in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures* (ed. W. Kraus and R.G. Wooden; SBLSCS 53; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2006), 68, presents this as “the text in its present outlook.”

9 Cf. the careful discussion of Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 63–83, who notes that this characterization is “only part of the truth” (68).

10 Ricoeur’s discussions regarding this line of thinking about texts can be seen in Paul Ricoeur, “The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation,” in *Hermeneutics and the Human Sciences* (ed. and trans. John B. Thompson; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 131–144; and idem. *Interpretation Theory: Discourse and the Surplus of Meaning* (Fort Worth, TX: Texas Christian University Press, 1976), 80–88. One of the most helpful appropriations of this metaphor for biblical interpretation is Sandra M. Schneiders, *The Revelatory Text: Interpreting the New Testament as Sacred Scripture* (second ed.; Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1999).

11 E.g., E.D. Hirsch, Jr. *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1967).

12 E.g., Luis Alonso Schökel, *A Manual of Hermeneutics* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

of interpretive information is that which is contained in the text itself without reference to other entities. The world *in front of the text* can be equated with the world of the reader. This is sometimes equated with a reader-oriented hermeneutic. However, this should not be understood simply as what the reader brings to a text, but also should include the world that the text projects.¹³ Any text, but especially a biblical text, exerts pressure on its readers that coerces them to come to grips with its subject matter.¹⁴ So it is more than just the reader's perspective; it includes the text's *Wirkungsgeschichte*.¹⁵

What we mean by this metaphor will become clearer as we look at the different translational models of the three projects. In essence, though, this metaphor can be used in the following way to describe the three LXX translation projects. All three are interested in the world of the text. This is their starting point. The difference lies in their emphasis. The BA project is primarily interested in the relationship between the world of the text and the world in front of the text. The NETS project is primarily interested in the relationship between the world behind the text and the world of the text. The LXX.D project tries to walk a mediating path by staying rooted in the world of the text while also looking both ways and keeping an eye on the world behind the text *and* the world in front of the text.

It is my contention that the LXX represents its own distinct communicative act, so that interpreting it requires understanding what was accomplished in that communicative act. The complexity in a translational communicative act is that it is communicating a previously written communicative act. Thus it needs to be treated as both *text* and *translation* if we are to come to grips fully with the LXX as a communicative act. When it comes to interpreting the LXX, I find it helpful to borrow Boyd-Taylor's proposal that the LXX should be interpreted based on two axioms:

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- 13 This is in fact Ricoeur's emphasis on interpretation: "The sense of a text is not behind the text, but in front of it ... What has to be understood is not the initial situation of discourse, but what points towards a possible world, thanks to the non-ostensive reference of the text. Understanding has less than ever to do with the author and his situations. It has to grasp the world-propositions opened up by reference to the text" (*Interpretation Theory*, 87). This is briefly and helpfully explored in Schneiders, *Revelatory Text*, 167–169.
 - 14 This language of pressure and coercion comes from Brevard S. Childs, "Toward a Recovery of Theological Exegesis," *ProEccl* 6/1 (1997): 16–26. See also C. Kevin Rowe, "Biblical Pressure and Trinitarian Hermeneutics," *ProEccl* 11/3 (2002): 295–312.
 - 15 This concept is most often associated with Hans-Georg Gadamer. See his, *Truth and Method* (sec. rev. ed.; trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall; London: T&T Clark, 2004, rep. 2012).

Axiom 1: The basis of exegesis is the text *qua* translation.

Axiom 2: The basis of exegesis is the translation *qua* text.¹⁶

As I understand these two axioms, they intend to communicate 1) that interpretation of the Septuagint cannot be properly carried out unless its character as translational literature is taken into account, and 2) that interpretation of the Septuagint must be interpretation of the text itself. These two axioms capture the dual nature of the Septuagint as a *translated text*. An approach to the text that only holds one of these two axioms will be out of balance. These two axioms are meant to be held in dialectic tension so that Axiom 1 is a check on Axiom 2 and vice versa. As we examine these modern approaches to the Septuagint, we will evaluate how they meet these two important axioms for septuagintal interpretation.

a *The World in Front of the Text: La Bible d'Alexandrie (BA)*

By saying that BA is primarily concerned with the relationship between the world of the text and the world in front of the text I mean to capture the operating principle of BA that states that the LXX is “an autonomous work detached from its parent text.”¹⁷ Thus, in principle, BA is not interested in the relationship between the LXX and its *Vorlage* but rather is primarily (perhaps solely?) interested in the Greek text as Greek text, and not the Greek text as translation.¹⁸ Put another way, the hermeneutical approach promoted by the

16 Cameron Boyd-Taylor, *Reading Between the Lines: The Interlinear Paradigm for Septuagint Studies* (BTS 8; Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 431–436 (here, 432).

17 Harl, “Traduire et Septante,” 36: “oeuvre autonome, détachée de son modèle.” Or put differently, in this view the LXX is “a literary work in the full sense of the term” (Harl, “Traduire et Septante,” 36, “un oeuvre littéraire au sens plein du term”). Elsewhere, Harl writes, “We are convinced that every act of translating results in a text which receives a new life within the domain of the translation language” (Marguerite Harl, “La Bible d'Alexandrie I. Translation Principles,” in *x Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Oslo, 1998* [SBLSCS 51; ed. B.A. Taylor; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2001], 184).

18 Harl, “Translation Principles,” 186, writes “the criterion for determining the words in the LXX is not the meaning of their counterparts in Hebrew. It is their meaning in the Koinè, or more precisely, the sense they acquire in the context of LXX sentences, according to the use the translators make of them.” Though cf. the procedure of Jan Joosten, a contributor to BA, who includes the Hebrew *Vorlage* as one of the three factors that go into understanding the meaning of a Greek word in the LXX. It is third in importance after normal Koine usage and the LXX context, but it is still considered a viable source for determining meaning in an

BA project is akin to a reader-oriented hermeneutic, whereby the primary locus of meaning is focused on the act of reading, not primarily the act of writing.¹⁹

If the task at hand is the interpretation of the Septuagint as a version of Scripture in its own right, then the principles set out by BA have much to commend themselves. This, however, is only half the story. As we have said, the LXX is a *translated* text, for that reason the Hebrew *Vorlage* should not be neglected when interpreting it, even if we agree on giving primacy to the translated text. If interpreting the LXX is a matter of understanding it as a communicative act then reference to the communicative agent, in this case the translator, is necessary. Thus, what the translator has accomplished in rendering the Hebrew text into Greek is part of understanding the textual act that is the LXX.

By way of analogy, let me suggest that interpreting the Septuagint, a translated text, is analogous to interpreting a composite text like we have in parts of the Hebrew Bible. It is commonly suggested that parts of the Hebrew Bible present a text that has been stitched together from underlying sources. One way of interpreting such a text would be to prioritize the text as text, but also take seriously the text as an artistically composite entity, situating any reading of the text within the literary growth of the book.²⁰ It is my suggestion that the interpretation of a translated text should follow a similar strategy. While prioritizing the translated text is certainly of primary importance, to neglect the source behind the text, especially in difficult instances that can often be illuminated by reference to the source text, seems misguided.²¹ The fact that the Septuagint is translational literature means that it is not compositional litera-

LXX text ("Source-Language Oriented Remarks on the Lexicography of the Greek Versions of the Bible," *ETL* 81/1 [2005]: 152–164).

- 19 E.g. Umberto Eco, *The Role of the Reader: Explorations in the Semiotics of Texts* (repr. ed.; Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), esp. 3–46; and Stanley Fish, *Is There a Text in This Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), esp. 167–173.
- 20 See for example, Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (rev. ed.; New York: Basic Books, 2011), 163–192. For a specific example of this approach see R.W.L. Moberly, "The Earliest Commentary on the Akedah," *VT* 38/3 (1988): 302–323.
- 21 Cf. Natalio Fernández Marcos, who agrees that the LXX was originally intended to be an independent literary work yet still thinks that the modern scholar is remiss to fail to make use of the Hebrew when interpreting the LXX ("Reactions to the Panel on Modern Translations," in *x Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Oslo, 1998* [ed. B.A. Taylor; SBLSCS 51; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2001], 239–240).

ture.²² To treat translational literature as if it were compositional literature is to confuse the categories of communication. For a translator, who is tasked with communicating an existing source text, does not have the same techniques available to him as an original author does.²³

In sum, while I agree with the approach of BA in giving priority to the Greek text as text, it is methodologically insufficient to ignore the source text when interpreting the Septuagint.²⁴ In terms of the two axioms, following BA's approach would be helpful in treating the translation *as text*, but its emphasis may lead to a neglect of the text *as translation*.

b *The World Behind the Text: A New English Translation of the Septuagint (NETS)*

By characterizing the NETS approach as primarily concerned with the relationship between the world of the text and the world behind the text, I mean to say that their emphasis is on the LXX and its relationship to its *Vorlage*.²⁵ The NETS project approaches the LXX by way of its interlinear paradigm, which describes the LXX translation as being best conceptualized as "a Greek 'inter-linear' translation of a Hebrew original."²⁶ Upon careful examination of the text-linguistic

22 This is the major point of contention of the NETS paradigm. See e.g., Cameron Boyd-Taylor, "In a Mirror, Dimly: Reading the Septuagint as a Document of Its Times," in *Septuagint Research: Issues and Challenges in the Study of the Greek Jewish Scriptures*, (ed. Wolfgang Kraus and R. Glenn Wooden; SBLSCS 53; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 15–17.

23 See Cameron Boyd-Taylor, "A Place in the Sun: The Interpretative Significance of LXX-Psalm 18:5c," *BIOCS* 31 (1998): 72, "Literary composition and literary translation are distinct socio-linguistic activities, with distinct methods and aims, and the hermeneutics of the former can seldom be applied to the latter."

24 It must be noted, however, that when one reads the volumes of BA, it is evident that they contain a wealth of information about the relationship between the Septuagint and its source text. Kraus, "Contemporary Translations," 68–69, suggests that there has been a shift in the BA project from its original conception to its current practices.

25 Cf. Pietersma, "NETS and the 'Upstream–Downstream' Metaphor," 233–234, critiques the upstream–downstream metaphor for implying that NETS is not interested in the LXX text but only in its *Vorlage*. That is not my intent with my "behind the text" metaphor.

26 Albert Pietersma, "A New English Translation of the Septuagint," in *x Congress of the International Organization for Septuagint and Cognate Studies. Oslo, 1998* (SBLSCS 51; ed. B.A. Taylor; Atlanta, GA: SBL, 2001), 219. The principles for the NETS program were first most fully set out by Albert Pietersma, "A New Paradigm for Addressing Old Questions: The Relevance of the Interlinear Model for the Study of the Septuagint," in *Bible and Computer*

character²⁷ of the LXX it is concluded that it is characterized by a high degree of dependence upon and tolerates a high degree of interference from its source text. From this Boyd-Taylor concludes that the LXX “was likely targeted for an ancillary role, one subservient to the study of the source text.”²⁸ In other words, it was meant to bring the reader to the source text (the Hebrew Bible) rather than bringing the source text to the reader.²⁹ Because of this, the NETS paradigm becomes one which finds the primary locus of interpretation in the relationship between the LXX and its source text, since the Septuagint was originally intended to function in this way.

How does this approach work in the actual practice? The strength of this approach is that it is an excellent method for interpreting the LXX in light of axiom 1, interpreting the text as translation.³⁰ However, in emphasizing axiom

(ed. Johann Cook; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 337–364. Since then the most comprehensive presentation and defense of the interlinear paradigm is Boyd-Taylor, *Reading Between the Lines*, esp. 89–111. A good summary of the principles behind the interlinear paradigm can be seen in Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright, “To the Reader of Nets,” in *A New English Translation of the Septuagint* (ed. Albert Pietersma and Benjamin G. Wright; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), xii–xx.

27 The terminology of text-linguistic character or constitutive character is borrowed by Boyd-Taylor and Pietersma from Descriptive Translation Studies. Boyd-Taylor defines constitutive character this way: “When a translated text is considered with respect to the historical enterprise which gave rise to it, its originating *Sitz im Leben*, it becomes readily apparent that the verbal character of the document will to some extent reflect the socio-linguistic practices proper to the larger cultural undertaking of which it was a part. We might call this aspect of the text its constitutive character” (Boyd-Taylor, “A Place in the Sun,” 73). See also Boyd-Taylor, *Reading Between the Lines*, 35–37.

28 Boyd-Taylor, *Reading Between the Lines*, 40.

29 See Albert Pietersma, “Septuagintal Exegesis and the Superscriptions of the Greek Psalter,” in *The Book of Psalms: Composition and Reception* (ed. Peter W. Flint and Patrick D. Miller, Jr.; Boston / Leiden: Brill, 2005) 443–475, esp. 445–447; and Benjamin G. Wright, III, “Access to the Source: Cicero, Ben Sira, the Septuagint and Their Audiences,” *JSJ* 34/1 (2003): 1–27, esp. 24–25. Though he never expressed it in terms of an interlinear paradigm Sebastian Brock made a similar claim almost forty years ago (“The Phenomenon of the Septuagint,” *OtSt* [1972]: 17). Cf. Takamitsu Muraoka, “Recent Discussions on the Septuagint Lexicography With Special Reference to the So-called Interlinear Model,” in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontext, Lebenswelten* (WUNT 219; ed. Martin Kasser and Wolfgang Kraus; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 222–223, on the use and misuse of this Brock statement by the proponents of the interlinear paradigm.

30 Even critics of the interlinear paradigm note that the character of the LXX is indeed literal and done on a largely word based translation approach so that “if it weren’t for the problem of the direction of writing, the Greek version could indeed easily be aligned between the

1, the interlinear paradigm neglects, at least in principle, axiom 2, interpreting the translation as text.³¹ Put another way, the hermeneutical approach of proponents of the NETS project is one akin to an author-oriented hermeneutic.³² The general difficulties of an author-oriented hermeneutic have been frequently noted.³³ In the Septuagint, an author-oriented hermeneutic is complicated by the fact that it is a translator-oriented hermeneutic. The process of translation further complicates the communicative act so that determining intention of the translator is very difficult.³⁴ Because the proponents of the interlinear paradigm view the constitutive character of the LXX as one half of an interlinear text, the only interpretive information is found in differences between the LXX and its source text.³⁵ Thus, the actual communicative act,

lines of the Hebrew source text" (Jan Joosten, "Reflections on the 'Interlinear Paradigm' in Septuagintal Studies," in *Scripture in Transition: Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Rajja Sollamo* [JSJSupp 126; ed. Anssi Voitila and Jutta Jokiranta; Boston/Leiden: Brill, 2008], 168).

- 31 However, Pietersma and Boyd-Taylor would argue that the interlinear paradigm does read the LXX according to axiom 2, interpreting the text as text. But their understanding of the text *as text* is tied up with their view of the LXX as an interlinear. Thus, for them, to interpret the text as it was intended is to interpret the text as one half of a Greek-Hebrew diglot. In my view, the approach of Pietersma and Boyd-Taylor is too narrow for the purposes of interpretation if we view the Septuagint as its own communicative act. As I understand the role of reading and interpreting the LXX, what Pietersma and Boyd-Taylor propose is the interpretation of the translators' transformations of their source text not their full communicative act. See Boyd-Taylor, *Reading Between the Lines*, 431-38; and idem., "A Place in the Sun," 71-75. Cf. Pietersma, "Text-Production and Text-Reception," 500-501. For further criticisms of this view see Joosten, "Reflections on the 'Interlinear Paradigm,'" and Muraoka, "Recent Discussions."
- 32 E.g., Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation*, esp. 24-67. For an appropriation and theological adaptation of this approach utilizing Speech-Act theory see Kevin J. Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in this Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1998), 201-280.
- 33 Most famously by W.M. Wimsatt and Monroe Beardsley, "The Intentional Fallacy," in *The Verbal Icon: Studies in the Meaning of Poetry* (Lexington, KY: University of Kentucky Press, 1954), 3-18. See also Ricoeur, "The Hermeneutical Function of Distanciation."
- 34 See Aejmelaeus, "Translation Technique," esp. 68-69.
- 35 According to Boyd-Taylor, "where the constitutive norm of isomorphism is suspended, there (and only there) do we have an invitation to interpret the text" (*Reading Between the Lines*, 437). Cf. also Albert Pietersma, "Text-Production and Text-Reception: Psalm 8 in Greek," in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontext, Lebenswelten* (WUNT 219; ed. Martin Kasser and Wolfgang Kraus; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 487-501; and idem., "Hermeneutics and a Translated Text" (paper read at Katholieke Universiteit on the occasion of the

viewed as the text as a whole, is neglected on the principle that the text *qua* text is intended to bring readers back to the source not to bring the source to the readers. As a principle of interpretation this seems inadequate. I see no reason why the interpretation of the LXX should be limited to interpreting it in light of its *Vorlage*, for as much as it is a *translation* it is also a *text*.

c ***Looking Both Ways: Septuaginta Deutsch (LXX.D)***

Proponents of LXX.D have labelled their approach as “on level.”³⁶ I am more inclined to view it as an approach which “looks both ways.” If the approach of BA is primarily concerned with the relationship between the world of the text and the world in front of the text, and the approach of NETS is primarily concerned with the relationship between the world of the text and the world behind the text, LXX.D tries to look both ways.

There are two factors that form the basis of this approach. The first is that the LXX is for the most part a word based translation of a Hebrew text. The second is that the *Sitz im Leben* of the translators, their theology, their literary sensitivity, and even their inexperience, all influence the product that is the LXX.³⁷ So, like those in the NETS approach, the proponents of LXX.D agree that the Septuagint “cannot be seen in isolation from its Hebrew *Vorlage*.” However, they do not go so far as regarding the Septuagint as crib to bring the Greek reader to the Hebrew text rather than the Hebrew text to the Greek reader.³⁸ Similarly, like the approach of BA, proponents of LXX.D view the LXX as a “literary work” that “stands on its own” but, unlike the BA approach they try to do justice to the fact that it is a translation “dependent on a Hebrew original.”³⁹ Thus, the proponents of the LXX.D approach seek to take a mediating position that is based on a mediating view of the nature of the LXX.⁴⁰

farewell to Professor Dr. Johan Lust, Leiden, 9 December 2005), 1–7, available online: <http://homes.chass.utoronto.ca/~pietersm/> (accessed 30 September, 2011).

36 E.g., Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 70.

37 See Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 66–67; cf. idem. “*Septuaginta Deutsch* (LXX.D): The Value of a German Translation of the Septuagint,” in “*Translation is Required*” *The Septuagint in Retrospect and Prospect* (SBLSCS; ed. Robert J.V. Hiebert; Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2010), 247.

38 Kraus, “*Septuaginta Deutsch* (LXX.D),” 247 (including quotation).

39 Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 83.

40 Kraus, “Contemporary Translations,” 70, writes, “I would say that the original translators of the LXX wanted to mediate between the tradition [of the Hebrew text] and the contemporary situation [of the translation]. This includes a relation to the *Vorlage* as well as the possibility of conscious modifications and attempts to bring things up-to-date. That is to

The major criticism of this “on level” approach is that in trying to walk this mediating path it “does not effectively keep separate the text as produced and the text as received.”⁴¹ This critique is most keenly felt if one accepts the view that the LXX as produced was originally intended to function as a “crib” to bring the Greek reader to the Hebrew text. For if this is the case then the text as produced (a crib to bring the reader to the Hebrew) is very different from the text as received (sacred Scripture in its own right). Does this mean that the German project confuses categories or is there a way to utilize both the world behind the text and the world in front of the text in the act of interpreting the Septuagint? I propose that understanding that the Septuagint is a communicative act suggests the most fruitful way forward for interpreting the Septuagint and is complementary to the approach of LXX.D.

d *The Septuagint as a Communicative Act*

I propose to view the LXX as its own communicative act that intended to communicate the Hebrew Scriptures into the linguistic, cultural, and religious register of Hellenistic Judaism.⁴² The LXX is a written act of communication and demands to be treated as such. In referring to the Septuagint as a written act of communication I am borrowing from Speech-Act Theory which argues that speaking, or in this case writing (or even translating!), is also doing.⁴³ When one speaks or writes one is also doing a number of acts. Speech-Act Theory has its own distinct, and often variegated, terminology for these acts but these are usually broken down into locutionary (propositional content), illocutionary (nature of the act of speaking⁴⁴) and perlocutionary (effect of

say our primary perspective is neither *amont* nor *aval* but is to translate ‘auf Augenhöhe mit dem Text’—the text in its present outlook.” See also Utzschneider, “Auf Augenhöhe mit Dem Text,” 20; and Siegfried Kreuzer, “A German Translation of the Septuagint,” *BIOCS* 34 (2001): 43.

41 Benjamin G. Wright, “The Septuagint and Its Modern Translators,” in *Die Septuaginta—Texte, Kontexte, Lebenswelten* (ed. Martin Karrer and Wolfgang Kraus; WUNT 219; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 111. For more explanation of the difference between text production and text reception from a proponent of the “upstream” approach see Pietersma, “Text-Production and Text-Reception.”

42 This definition is intentionally broad enough to encompass most theories of LXX origins. For a recent survey of the various theories of LXX origins see Dines, *The Septuagint*, 47–61.

43 Speech Act Theory was pioneered by J.L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words* (2nd ed.; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), and John R. Searle, *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969).

44 Though the language of force or energy is often used in describing illocutionary acts it seems more helpful to this non-specialist to speak of the illocution of the speech-act as

the speech-act) acts. It is in discerning this act that meaning is to be found.⁴⁵ The implication of recognizing that both spoken and written discourse are communicative acts is that it necessarily brings with it a level of involvement from both the author and reader.⁴⁶ Speech-Act Theory provides a rationale for a hermeneutic that is not purely author-based, nor purely reader-based. Instead, recognizing texts as Speech-Acts implies that the meaning of a text cannot be separated from either the author (or translator) or the reader.

The Septuagint, however, is not simply a written act. It is, more specifically, a written act communicating a previously written act. In a recent article, Randall Gauthier has provided one of the first methodologically thorough attempts to present a hermeneutic for interpreting the Septuagint as a text in its own right. Gauthier borrows from cognitive theory, and suggests that the Septuagint can be described as a higher order act of communication which is seeking to communicate a first order act of communication (Hebrew *Vorlage*).⁴⁷

Whether or not we adopt Gauthier's terminology, his ideas are quite complementary to the approach proposed here and in the LXX.D project.⁴⁸ He writes,

Lest we fall into the trap of merely describing an LXX text *in the process of being translated*, on the one hand, or regarding it as a *first-order act of communication* (i.e. a *composition*), on the other, it would appear methodologically incumbent on the modern exegete to consider both source and target as acts of textual communication *in conjunction*.⁴⁹

If we take the LXX translation seriously as its own act of communication, then the approaches described by LXX.D and Gauthier commend themselves. The translators are not authors in the sense that they are composing a text, but

the kind or classification of the speech in view. It is helpful to see some of the different classifications of illocutionary acts: assertives, directives, commissives, expressives, declarations, assertive declarations. For summaries see Eugene Botha, "Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation," *Neot* 41/2 (2007): 277–278; and Richard S. Briggs, *Words in Action: Speech Act Theory and Biblical Interpretation* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2001), 50–58.

45 According to Vanhoozer, "meaning is a three-dimensional communicative action, with a form and matter (propositional content), energy and trajectory (illocutionary force), and a teleology or final purpose (perlocutionary effect)" (*Is There a Meaning in This Text*, 218).

46 The hermeneutical approach of self-involvement is the major contribution of Briggs, *Words in Action*, esp. 147–182.

47 Randall X. Gauthier, "Toward an LXX Hermeneutic," *JNSL* 35/1 (2009): 45–74, esp. 67–69.

48 Gauthier specifically notes that his approach is complementary to the approach in LXX.D (*Ibid.*, 68).

49 *Ibid.*, 68, italics original.

they are the communicating agents of the textual act that is the LXX. Thus, if interpreting the LXX is understanding the communicative act, then paying attention to the LXX *as translation* is invaluable for the interpretive enterprise. However, the actual communicative act is the text itself; as such the primary focus for interpretation must be the LXX *as text*. Thus, this approach seeks to read the LXX in light of both of the two axioms we have mentioned.

Interpreting the LXX as a distinct communicative act seeks to give priority to the world of the text but also seeks to hold the world behind the text and the world in front of the text in dialectical tension. The world behind gives emphasis to the origins of the text and reminds the reader that this text is a *translated* text. The world in front gives emphasis to the text and its own *Wirkungsgeschichte*, and reminds the reader that this text is a translated *text*. Neither NETS nor BA are wrong in their approaches, but for the purposes of interpreting the LXX they strike this reader as too limited. One should look both ways when crossing the road of septuagintal interpretation. However, lest we get lost in theory, we will now briefly explore this method by offering a reading of 1 Reigns 16:1–13.

3 Reading 1 Reigns 16:1–13

1 Reigns 16 begins by following immediately on the rejection of Saul in 1 Reigns 15, even using the same words for Saul's rejection, ἐξουθενώ (16:1; 15:23, 26), and Samuel's mourning, πενθέω (16:1; 15:35).

16:1

יְנִי	יִתְּרָאֵךְ	תִּלְבֵּךְ	לְאַרְצִי־לְעַ
κάγω	ἐξουθένωκα αὐτόν	μή Βασιλεύειν	ἐπὶ Ἰσραήλ

The phrase κάγω ἐξουθένωκα αὐτόν μή Βασιλεύειν ἐπὶ Ἰσραήλ, would likely sound slightly odd to Greek ears.⁵⁰ NETS, for example, renders the phrase as “And it

50 The Greek word ἐξουθενώ apparently derives from οὐδεῖς (see Henry St. John Thackeray, *A Grammar of the Old Testament in Greek According to the Septuagint* [Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1909], 104–105), and probably connotes something like “to consider as nothing” or “to set at naught” or “to disdain, scorn” (see *LSJ*; *LEH*). This is

is I that have set him at naught not to be king over Israel.” This captures the awkwardness of the Greek. What does it mean to “be set at naught” or “despised” and now not be king over Israel? On the one hand, as we mentioned, the use of ἐξουθενώ clearly recalls Saul’s rejection (15:23, 26), but the meaning of the phrase remains opaque. When we look at the Hebrew it becomes clear that when the translator of 1 Reigns uses ἐξουθενώ, they are exclusively translating דָּאַמ (“to refuse, reject”). This is different from the practice of LXX Pentateuch, which uses ἀπειθέω “to refuse, to disobey” (3×) and ὑπεροράω “to disregard, despise” (2×). For some reason the translators of 1 Reigns saw ἐξουθενώ as an appropriate translation for דָּאַמ, and they stuck to it exclusively.⁵¹ The only reason I can see for these translational decisions is a particular reading of the contexts within which 1 Samuel uses דָּאַמ. The theme of rejection is very important in 1 Samuel. The translators seem to have interpreted this idea of rejection very negatively and used the description of “despised” (ἐξουθενώ) to render the act of rejection. Thus, the people did not just “reject” the Lord, they “despised” him (8:7). Saul did not just “reject” the word of the Lord, he “despised” it (15:23, 26). Here is a case where being attentive to the translators’ *Vorlage* not only helps explain an odd and difficult Greek formulation, but highlights a significant theme that the translators have developed in their translational choices.

The Lord then tells Samuel to go to Bethlehem, because he has seen (ὀράω) a king for himself there amongst the sons of Jesse (16:1). The theme of “seeing,” especially the verb ὀράω, will become a key theme in this narrative, as we will have cause to see.⁵²

not a common word in Greek usage, though a Greek reader would certainly be able to understand it. Plutarch appears to use ἐξουθενίζω, a similar verbalization of οὐδεὶς (*Parallel Minora* 308e, 310c). Thus it seems clear that the word would be understandable but unusual.

51 This is known as stereotyping. See Tov, *Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint*, 20–23. Though scholars often suggest caution in reading too much into a translational choice that is a stereotype, the significance of the contexts of the “rejection” scenes and the fact that the practice differs from the Greek Pentateuch, suggests that this stereotyped rendering is quite intentional.

52 The theme of “seeing,” especially the word הָרָא, has been frequently noted in the Hebrew text of 1 Samuel 16, but how the Greek text has used and adapted this theme has not been so far been explored. See Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1985), 98–100; Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 185–187; Diana Vikander Edelman, *King Saul in the Hagiography of Judah* (JSOTSupp 121; Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1991), 112–123; and J. Randall Short, *The Surprising Election and Confirmation of King David* (Harvard Theological Studies 63; Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 135–144, 146–148.

Samuel requires a little convincing but eventually goes to Bethlehem. Upon his arrival the elders of the town come to greet him but they are distraught (ἐξίστημι) at his coming. The use of ἐξίστημι, which is defined as “to become astonished, amazed, stunned,”⁵³ requires further analysis. Are the elders merely surprised or are they actually afraid at Samuel’s arrival? This is a case where paying attention to the world behind the text and the world of the text help confirm what is being communicated. A look at the world behind the text shows that 1 Reigns predominantly uses ἐξίστημι to translate דרר, which means “to tremble,” but can mean by extension “fear” or “astonishment,” (*HALOT*) and at least once it is used to translate דתת, which means “to be shattered, filled with terror, or dismayed” (*HALOT*). The semantic overlap of these words suggests that it is the context of “astonishment” or “fear” that led to this translation choice.⁵⁴ Close attention to the world of the text shows that in contexts where fear is expected (e.g., 1 Rgns. 4:13) or when used in conjunction with φοβέω (e.g., 1 Rgns. 17:11), the translator regularly uses ἐξίστημι to suggest fear or distress in the narrative. Thus, we imagine that when the elders come to greet Samuel in 16:4 it is in a spirit of significant distress, noted especially by their question, “do you come in peace, O Seer (ὁ βλέπων)?”⁵⁵

Samuel soothes the elders’ concerns, telling them that he comes in peace in order to sacrifice to the Lord. He then invites them to the sacrifice, saying “sanctify yourselves and rejoice with me today.” The OG here differs from the MT, which says “sanctify yourselves and come with me to the sacrifice.”

16:5

יְשַׁכְּלְתֶּהּ	דְּבִאֲתָא	יִתְּאֵ	חֲבִיבִי
ἀγιασθήτε	καὶ εὐφρανθήτε	μετ’ ἐμοῦ	σήμερον

It is difficult to say which reading may have been original. A number of scholars prefer the OG reading to the MT, suggesting that perhaps the ambiguous OG reading left the reader wondering why the elders were told to sanctify them-

53 T. Muraoka, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the Septuagint* (Louvain: Peeters, 2009), 252.

54 See Bernard Taylor, “The NETS Translation of 1 Reigns: Lexical Issues,” *BIOCS* 36 (2003): 82.

55 The use of the title “seer,” which is an LXX plus (though present in 4QSam^b), hearkens back to chapter 9, the only other place to use the title, and reminds the reader of Saul’s anointing by Samuel.

selves. Thus, the MT's reading was introduced to explain this difficulty by inviting the elders to the sacrifice.⁵⁶ If this is the case it is another instance where an interpreter viewing the narrative from behind the text would find no interpretive interest, because the translator was not the one producing the variant, but rather those rendering the MT. But if our interest is the translation as a communicative act, then it is of interpretive interest and should be incorporated into one's reading of the narrative.

The word εὐφραίνω ("rejoice") is relatively rare in 1 Reigns⁵⁷ and in the present context causes the reader to recall the beginning of Hannah's song: "My heart was made firm in the Lord; my horn (κέρας) was exalted in my god; my mouth was made wide against enemies; I rejoiced (εὐφραίνω) in your deliverance" (1 Rgns. 2:1).⁵⁸ The setting of our text in ch. 16 where Samuel has taken up his horn (κέρας) to anoint (χρίω) the future king (βασιλεύς), all key words from Hannah's song, now further recalls the song of Hannah by having Samuel tell the elders of the city to rejoice (εὐφραίνω) with him. The reading of the OG adds one more element that recalls the joyful and triumphant song of Hannah. This suggests to the reader that *this* anointed one is going to be the one we have been waiting for.⁵⁹

Samuel then goes to Jesse in order to meet his sons. As soon as Samuel lays eyes on Jesse's eldest son, Eliab, he is convinced that this is the Lord's anointed. The Lord responds to Samuel's exclamation. This response contains the densest

56 Ralph W. Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament: From the Septuagint to Qumran* (Old Testament Series; Philadelphia, PA: Fortress Press, 1974), 74–75. McCarter, 1 Samuel, 274; and Smith, *Samuel*, 146, also support the OG reading. The editors of 4QSam^b, follow the Greek and reconstruct this text as הִתְקַדְּשׁוּ אִתִּי הַיּוֹם, "sanctify yourselves and rejoice with me today" (Frank Moore Cross, et. al. *Qumran Cave 4: XI: 1–2 Samuel* [DJD 17; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005], 226, 228).

57 The other scenes where this word is used are the peoples' rejoicing at the return of the ark (6:13), and the rejoicing of the people of Jabesh-Gilead at their deliverance from Nahash (11:9, 15).

58 The end of Hannah's song also has numerous ties with our text: "He gives strength to our kings (βασιλευσιν ἡμῶν) and will exalt the horn (κέρας) of his anointed (χριστοῦ αὐτοῦ)." Among the many variant readings found in the song of Hannah, the most significant for our purpose is the reading of the plural "our kings" (βασιλευσιν ἡμῶν) in OG against the singular "his king" (למלכו) in MT. On the textual issues of this text see Theodore J. Lewis, "The Textual History of the Song of Hannah: 1 Samuel 11 1–10," VT 44/1 (1994): 18–46; and McCarter, 1 Samuel, 68–71, both of whom view the OG reading as secondary. In either reading v. 10 gives the song a monarchic setting and so connects with our text.

59 On this theme of the expected chosen one in 1 Samuel see Benjamin J.M. Johnson, "The Heart of Yhwh's Chosen One in 1 Samuel," JBL 131/3 (2012): 455–466.

use of the key theme of “seeing” in the narrative. The Lord says to Samuel, “Do not look (ἐπιβλέψῃς) upon his appearance (ὄψιν) nor to his great stature, for I have scorned him, for not as humankind looks (ἐμβλέσεται) does God see (ὄψεται), for humankind sees (ὄψεται) into the face, but God sees (ὄψεται) into the heart” (1 Rgns. 16:7).

This is one instance where interpreting the Greek text is aided by paying attention to how the translator is manipulating his Hebrew source text. If we are simply reading the Greek text as a compositional narrative we may assume that the narrative is simply playing on the key theme of “seeing” by oscillating back and forth between two words for seeing—ὁράω and βλέπω. When we look at how the translators are handling their *Vorlage*, we get a slightly different picture:

Seeing in 1 Reigns 16:7

אֱלֹהִים	Mὴ ἐπιβλέψῃς
כִּי לֹא אֲשֶׁר יִרְאֶה הָאָדָם	ὅτι οὐχ ὡς ἐμβλέσεται ἄνθρωπος
—	ὄψεται ὁ θεός
כִּי הָאָדָם יִרְאֶה לְעֵינָיו	ὅτι ἄνθρωπος ὄψεται εἰς πρόσωπον
וַיְהִי הָאָדָם לִלְבָב	ὁ δὲ θεὸς ὄψεται εἰς καρδίαν

Of the seven uses of ראה in 1 Samuel 16, Reigns translates all but one with ὁράω.⁶⁰ When the Hebrew varies its vocabulary in 16:7 and uses נבט instead of ראה, the Greek follows suit and translates נבט with ἐπιβλέπω instead of ὁράω. However, in the second half of v. 7 the Greek varies from ὁράω to ἐμβλέπω when the Hebrew continues to use ראה.⁶¹ How do we explain this variation? The occasional stylistic use of lexical variation in portions of the LXX has been noted before in other contexts.⁶² However, in the present context there is also evidence of this lexical variation being used as an intentional literary device.

60 It also translates מראה (“appearance”), from the same root as ראה, with ὄψις, from the same root as ὁράω in 16:7.

61 Though Frank Moore Cross, “The Oldest Manuscripts From Qumran,” *JBL* 74 (1955): 166, notes that 4QSam^b could have read כִּי לֹא כְאֲשֶׁר יִבִּיט הָאָדָם following the OG. The text of 4QSam^b is not extant here, so this is conjecture based solely on the Greek text.

62 Nechama Leider, “Assimilation and Dissimilation Techniques in the LXX of the Book of Balaam,” *Textus* 12 (1985): 79–95, discusses this phenomenon as “dissimilation.” Though Leider’s classification of “dissimilation” does not exactly fit what we see in the translation

The two uses of a form of βλέπω in 1 Reigns 16 are the only two instances where a verb of seeing is negated (Μή ἐπιβλέψῃς, οὐχ ὡς ἐμβλέψεται). Furthermore, both instances of a form of βλέπω are used in a negative context.⁶³ Samuel is reprimanded and told not to look (טַבַּח) at Eliab's appearance. Then the Lord tells Samuel that he does not see as humankind sees (הָרָא). The translator's varying use of ὁράω and βλέπω further emphasizes this difference between inferior human seeing and superior divine seeing.

This is an instance where one of the key aspects of the narrative is further clarified and emphasized by observing how the translator is varying from his *Vorlage*. In this case interpreting the text as *translation* adds to the interpretation of the translation as *text* and the reader has a better perception of what is accomplished in this communicative act.

After Eliab is rejected, Samuel tells Jesse to bring the rest of his sons before him. He does so and each is declared to be "not chosen" (οὐκ ἐξελέξατο). Three times the narrative repeats this refrain: not chosen, not chosen, not chosen. The reader's anticipation is piqued. Who then, we must ask, *is* chosen? A last son, the small one, is left. He is sent for, and he appears before our eyes in detailed description. He is a ruddy and he is beautiful of eyes (either he has pretty eyes, or he's pretty to look at), but in the Greek he is more than that, he is "good in appearance *to the Lord*" (ἀγαθὸς ὁράσει Κυρίῳ).

16:12a

הָרָא	אֶמְבֹּלֵשׁ	עַם־יִשְׂרָאֵל	יְהוָה	—
καὶ οὗτος	πυρράκης	μετὰ κάλλους ὀφθαλμῶν	καὶ ἀγαθὸς ὁράσει	Κυρίῳ

The presence of "to the Lord" in the OG is understood by most commentators to be a pious insertion on the part of a scribe or translator in order to make the description of this last son fit with the statement about the Lord not looking upon appearances but looking upon the heart in v. 7.⁶⁴ It strikes me as just

of הָרָא in 1 Reigns 16, it does show that the technique of lexical variation was available to the translator.

63 Even the reference to Samuel as ὁ βλέπων ("the Seer") could be construed negatively, because the reference to Samuel as "the Seer," increases the irony that he fails to see rightly.

64 So Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *1 and 11 Samuel: A Commentary* (OTL; Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1964), 138–139; H.J. Stoebe, *Das Erste Buch Samuelis* (KAT; Stuttgart: Gütersloher Verlaghaus Gerd Mohn, 1973), 302; McCarter, *1 Samuel*, 275; and Lyle Eslinger,

as likely that a pious scribe or translator would remove this reference to the Lord because it appears to make the Lord's choice of David to be on the basis of looks, something expressly denied just a few verses before. Again, this is an instance where it is difficult to say whether this variant is the product of the translator's *Vorlage* or pious exegesis, so that if our purpose in reading this text is simply discerning the translator's view we must be very cautious in what we say. However, if we are reading the narrative to understand the text itself, then we can say that in the current form of the Greek text this variation functions to qualify David's depiction. He is not just good in appearance; he is good in appearance *to the Lord*.

The Lord now tells Samuel to arise and anoint David. The reader has not yet been introduced to David. He simply appears on the scene as if we already know him, which the implied reader surely does.

The Lord does not merely command Samuel to anoint David; he gives a reason for it. He tells Samuel that "this one is good" (οὗτος ἀγαθός ἐστιν).

16:12b

קוּם	מְשִׁיחָהוּ	כִּי־יֵהְיֶה	—	הוּא
Ἀνάστα	καὶ χρίσον τὸν Δαυεὶδ	ὅτι οὗτος	ἀγαθός	ἐστιν

David was previously described as "good of appearance to the Lord" but now he is labelled unambiguously as good. It seems important to this narrative that David be judged as good. He is good in appearance to the Lord (16:12a), he is, by inference, good of heart, and he is just good (16:12b). This is more pronounced in the OG than in the MT. In the MT the Lord simply tells Samuel that "this is he" (זֶה הוּא). The OG version, as a text of its own, whether by exegesis or differing *Vorlage* further emphasizes David's "goodness."

The first half of ch. 16 then ends with Samuel anointing David and the spirit of the Lord rushing upon David (v. 13). The exact phrase "and the spirit of the Lord came upon David" (καὶ πνεῦμα Κυρίου ἐπὶ Δαυεὶδ) is used of Saul (1 Rgns. 11:6, predicted in 10:6). However, the description of David has one further element, the spirit of the Lord comes upon him from that day and onward (ἀπὸ

"A Change of Heart: 1 Samuel 16," in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie* (ed. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2009), 357, n. 23.

τῆς ἡμέρας καὶ ἐπάνω), subtly reminding the reader that David's story does not end in the Lord's abandonment as Saul's story does.⁶⁵

4 Conclusion: Hermeneutics and a Translated Text

Let us conclude as we began, by stating a simple fact: the LXX is a translated text. This simple fact influences everything we do with this document. It must never be forgotten that the LXX is a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible but it must also never be forgotten that it is a literary product of ancient Judaism. These two facts ought to be held in tandem when interpreting the LXX.

The LXX is an important document for a myriad of reasons. One of those reasons is that it is an example of how at least some early Jews received and represented their sacred scriptures into Greek. As the late Septuagint specialist John Wevers wrote, the LXX "is a humanistic document of interest by and for itself ... It is not just a source for interesting emendations, but gives us an insight into the faith and attitudes of Alexandrian Jewry of the third century BCE."⁶⁶ As Kraus argues, the LXX "is a work that is dependent on a Hebrew original (*Vorlage*) but nevertheless stands on its own."⁶⁷ If we can take these various aspects of the LXX seriously and approach the text as a text and as a translation, then we can begin to develop a hermeneutic that is appropriate for this translational text.

Interpreting a text is a difficult task, even more so a *translated* text, even more so a translation of a *sacred* text, even more so a translation of a sacred text that became a sacred text in its own right. But if we approach it, as we have argued here, as its own communicative act, as a text that is both a translation and a literary text in its own right, and allow these two aspects to stand dialectically side by side, then perhaps we are on the right track towards appropriately receiving this text as a translated text. I conclude with a quote from Albert Pietersma: "As to hermeneutics of translated literature—the fields

65 So Smith, *Samuel*, 147; Klein, *1 Samuel*, 162. Though Tsumura, *First Book of Samuel*, 423, argues that too much has been made of the sporadic vs. permanent nature of these two instances of an anointing of the spirit.

66 Wevers, "Interpretative Character and Significance of the Septuagint," 95. Wevers made this point explicitly with reference to the Greek Pentateuch, but I believe it can, *mutatis mutandis*, be applied to the whole LXX.

67 Kraus, "Contemporary Translations," 83.

are white unto harvest, but the labourers are (as yet) few.”⁶⁸ With such a rich field to be plowed let us hope that this is not always the case.⁶⁹

68 Pietersma, “Hermeneutics and a Translated Text,” 7.

69 The recent work by J. Ross Wagner, *Reading the Sealed Book: Old Greek Isaiah and the Problem of Septuagint Hermeneutics* (Tübingen/Waco, TX: Mohr Siebeck/Baylor University, 2013), was published after this essay had been written and so could not be incorporated into the discussion. It is, however, an example of a similar attempt to come to grips with LXX hermeneutics. The SBL panel response to this book has also been published in the recent volume of *JSCS* 47 (2014): 17–47.

The Not Not-Inglorious Death of Samson

Kerry Lee

In Judges 16:28–31, Samson, now blinded and rendered powerless by the absence of Yahweh's presence, calls upon Yahweh and requests strength one last time so that he can avenge himself upon the Philistines. He then grasps the pillars supporting the temple of Dagon and leans upon them, destroying the temple and killing about 3,000 Philistines and himself in the process. This is a number, the narrator tells us, which surpasses the total number of Philistines he killed in his lifetime. His body is later recovered by his kin and brought back to his homeland where it is buried.

In many a popular retelling, homiletic setting, or even scholarly analysis of the Samson story, his death is the high point of his heroism. Up until this point he has been a morally ambiguous character. He is drawn only to Philistine women (or at least women who mingle with Philistines), but he humiliates, slaughters, and otherwise inconveniences Philistines at the same time. He neglects Yahwistic standards of conduct, but the spirit of Yahweh moves on Samson more frequently and spectacularly than on any other character in the Hebrew Bible. But in the eyes of the majority of readers, Samson's slaughter of 3,000 Philistines ends the story on a high note. Not only is Samson's death interpreted positively, but this interpretation inevitably colours the entire Samson story. While his life has been morally inconclusive at best and misspent at worst, the manner of his death is seen as redemptive, indicating Samson has learned his lesson and turned to Yahweh alone for his help. This, in turn, confirms his whole life as a positive, if complicated, example.

That the quality of one's death would carry such importance is not unusual, neither in the modern nor the ancient world. Herodotus, for example, tells the story of how Solon refused to tell King Croesus of Lydia that he was the most fortunate of all men, despite all his power and wealth, because, "We must look to the conclusion of every matter, and see how it shall end, for there are many to whom heaven has given a vision of blessedness, and yet afterwards brought them to utter ruin" (Herodotus, *Hist.* 1.32 [Godley, LCL]). To be counted fortunate in Solon's esteem, one had to end a good life with a good death.¹ The

¹ By 'good death' I mean primarily the sociological and anthropological sense of the noble or blessed death, not in the medical sense with its ethical debates concerning end-of-life treatments, even though the two senses tend to influence each other. For more on this distinction,

attitude is common, even if the ideals that constitute a good death can vary considerably from culture to culture.²

In storytelling, the narrated death of a character is highly significant. By 'narrated death' I mean a death scene where the events leading up to and following the death of a character are narrated closely within present story time, as opposed to a death related analeptically or in a summarized report. In Hebrew narrative, a narrated death always says something about the character who is dying. If the death has features in common with the cultural ideal of the good death, the character is a blessed or noble character in the final evaluation, no matter how difficult his life has been. The opposite is also true that when a character dies a bad or ignoble death, the final evaluation of the character is negative.

The history of interpretation of the Samson story reveals this inextricable link between Samson's life and death. Those who see the portrayal of Samson as primarily heroic also tend to downplay Samson's faults and present him as dying a noble death. Josephus regards Samson as extraordinary in every virtue with the exception of his weakness to women and says this of Samson's death: "And it is but right to admire the man for his valour, his strength, and the grandeur of his end, as also for the wrath which he cherished to the last against his enemies" (*Ant.* 5.317 [Thackeray, LCL]). Pseudo-Philo paraphrases the story and has Samson pray, "'O Lord God of my fathers, hear me yet this once, and strengthen me that I may die with these Philistines: for this sight of the eyes which they have taken from me was freely given unto me by thee.'" Then as Samson dies he has him say, "'Go forth, O my soul, and be not grieved. Die, O my body, and weep not for thyself'" (*Bib Ant.* 43.7 [M.R. James; London: SPCK, 1917]). By subtly shifting the elements of Samson's last two pieces of dialogue in Judges 16, Pseudo-Philo changes the character of Samson's death. The requested strength is initially connected to facing death as opposed to exacting vengeance, and the offence of the blinding of Samson is piously described as a sin against God. This sanitizes and ennobles Samson's prayer. Finally, Samson's self-encouragement highlights his courage, perhaps even his selflessness, while the mention of dying "with the Philistines" has been transferred to the prayer.

see Allan Kellehear, "Good Death," in *Encyclopedia of Death and Dying* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 209–210; Clare Gittings, "Good Death, Historical Perspectives," *Encyclopedia of Death and Dying* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 210–211.

2 One does find, however, certain obvious common features, like death being better if it occurs after a long and eventful life, if the dying one has family (especially children), and if the dying one is emotionally at peace. Conversely, to die like a criminal or to die alone is generally considered a bad death.

Notably, Pseudo-Philo also inflates the number of casualties Samson inflicts to 40,000 men and women.

Christian interpretation of the Samson story, and especially of his death, was early on and for a long time almost exclusively positive. The author of Hebrews famously includes Samson in his list of individuals who overcame by faith.³ For the Church fathers, Samson was a type of Christ, and most elements of the Samson story were allegorised to prefigure elements of the gospel story. Samson's death, in addition to being interpreted as a victory for the sake of the allegorical connection with Jesus' death, came to be seen as an example of overcoming temptation and of repentance, whereby sins were destroyed.⁴ Samson's death returned prisoners to their towns as Christ's death returned sin's prisoners to their inheritance.⁵ Ambrose assesses Samson's death in a quotation from which is derived the title for this paper: "Though slain, Samson attained his wished-for triumph, greater than all his former victories, and a death not inglorious or lacking luster ... [I]n his death Samson conquered himself and made his invincible soul despise death, giving no thought to the end of life which all people fear."⁶

Many more such examples could be cited, from this period and from hundreds of years thereafter, but the essential character of interpretation remained the same in the Christian tradition.⁷ While Samson's death was usually acknowledged to be tragic, it was also understood to be honourable and the means whereby he brought deliverance to Israel, or else a type of the sin-destroying death of Christ. Even today, while far from a consensus, the majority of scholars continue to understand Samson's death as an essentially honourable thing.⁸

3 Sir 46:11–12 should also be considered in this context, even though Samson's name does not specifically occur. The Judges as a group are interpreted positively, and there is no reason not to consider Samson included in this group.

4 Caesarius of Arles, Sermon 199.5, cited in John R. Franke, ed., *Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1–2 Samuel* (accs: Old Testament 4; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 166–167.

5 Ephrem of Syria, Hymns on Paradise 13.12–13, cited in Franke, 167.

6 Ambrose, Letter 35, cited in Franke, 166.

7 In medieval Judaism, Samson was typically seen as a national hero, and the emphasis was on his incomparable strength.

8 Over the last several centuries, however, there has been a growing tendency to view Samson's role in Judges negatively, and this has led to a reevaluation of his death. The beginnings of this were seen in the tendency to draw contrasts between Samson and Christ, albeit while still using Samson as a type. More recent examples of this approach include A. Graeme Auld, *Joshua, Judges and Ruth* (Daily Study Bible; Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1984) and Hans Wilhelm Hertzberg, *Die Bücher Josua, Richter, Ruth* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1953). A growing number of Judges scholars approach Samson's death as something

Niditch says, "Samson's death is presented as heroic."⁹ Webb likewise says, "Samson is allowed to die with dignity and in so doing to fulfil the purpose for which he was born."¹⁰ Even where heroism or dignity are not specifically in view, there is still a tendency to project death-bed repentance drama onto the story, to turn it into a prodigal son or repentant thief on the cross story.¹¹

Underlying much if not most of the positive interpretations of Samson's death is an important assumption. Samson functionally dies in battle against his enemies, and this is seen as a noble and virtuous thing. In Solon's aforementioned answer to Croesus, the most fortunate man, in his opinion, was a commoner who lived a good and full life and then died in battle defending his home city. In ancient Greece as well as in the Western civilization which derives so much from it, to die in battle for a good cause is a good way to die. The epitome of the glorious death in battle also comes to us through Herodotus: the defeat of the Greek forces at the battle of Thermopylae. With stories like Thermopylae in our mental furniture, death in battle is a kind of death to which

of questionable if not negative value. Tammi Schneider says it most clearly when she writes, "The text's judgment is severe; Samson was the only judge to die in battle with the enemy" (*Judges* (Berit Olam; Collegeville, mn: Liturgical Press, 2000), 226). Klein sees in Samson's death a negatively ironic twist on a "testament of the dying hero" type-scene (Lillian R. Klein, *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* (JSOTSup 68; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 135). Block says, "... the narrator's comment [of the number killed] should not be interpreted as a compliment. This is a tragic note ... Indeed, he accomplishes more for God dead than alive" (Daniel Block, *Judges, Ruth* (nac 6; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1999), 469). See also Gregory T.K. Wong, *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges* (VTSup 111; Leiden: Brill, 2006), 175–176. One scholar who has tried to find a middle ground is Trent Butler, who criticizes both extremes for over simplifying the situation (*Judges* (wbc 8; Nashville: Nelson, 2009), 353–356).

- 9 Susan Niditch, *Judges: A Commentary* (otl; Louisville, ky: Westminster John Knox, 2008), 171.
- 10 Barry G. Webb, *The Book of Judges: An Integrated Reading* (JSOTSup 46; Sheffield: jsot, 1987), 172. See also Robert H. O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (VTSup; Leiden: Brill, 1996), 296 ("Samson's suicide seems heroic"); Roger Ryan, *Judges* (Readings; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2007); Renate Jost, "God of Love/God of Vengeance, or Samson's 'Prayer for Vengeance,'" in *A Feminist Companion to Judges* (ed. Athalya Brenner; A Feminist Companion to the Bible (Second Series) 4; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 117–125.
- 11 For example, Crenshaw writes, "His ... prayer bears witness to the conviction that God had not forsaken him although all others had ... All things could be set right in a moment. Contrition of heart secured divine compassion. The sinner need not despair so long as Yahweh was his or her God" (James L. Crenshaw, *Samson: A Secret Betrayed, a Vow Ignored* (London: spck, 1979), 135).

our literary instincts immediately lean toward ascribing honour and glory (and often some kind of redemptive quality), albeit while admitting its tragedy. This value system is especially evident in modern cinema.¹² But the appropriateness of this instinctual bestowal of honour is precisely the point I want to contest. We should not presuppose that a death in battle connotes a good death, particularly in light of the Hebrew corpus, which must be our primary context for deriving these sorts of unspoken values.

So how, then, are we to evaluate the death of Samson? A good place to begin is to ask what constitutes a good death in Hebrew narrative.¹³ The deaths of indisputably heroic characters¹⁴ (meaning characters on whom the favour of Yahweh rests to the end) are marked by a number of motifs including dying at the appropriate time (usually, but not necessarily, after a long life), having good health until the day of death, having heirs (especially sons), designating a primary or worthy successor, insuring the continuation of one's legacy through verbal provisions right before dying, meeting death with awareness, meeting death in mental and physical peace, being mourned, and being buried in one's home area.¹⁵ On the contrary, the death of a wicked character is described

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- 12 Consider, for example, the readiness with which we accept Boromir's death as honorable and redemptive in both the book *The Two Towers* and the movie *The Fellowship of the Ring*, or the death of most of *The Magnificent Seven* or their original incarnations in *The Seven Samurai*. It is interesting how readily the story of the latter was able to be adapted from its Japanese warrior-culture origin. Consider also the portrayal of the death of William Wallace in *Braveheart*, which though technically not a death in battle is clearly depicted as having a defiant honor transcending its criminal execution veneer.
 - 13 It is important to understand that this question deals with literary conventions and ideals, and its answer says little about what the average Israelite may have felt about death. While I will argue that the death of a named character in battle is indicative of shame and the wrath of Yahweh, this may very well not have been the attitude held toward every Israelite casualty in real life.
 - 14 These would include at least the deaths of Abraham (Gen 24:1–25:11), Isaac (Gen 27:1–28:9, 35:22b–29), Jacob (Gen 47:27–50:21), Joseph (Gen 50:22–26), Moses (Deut 32–34), Joshua (Josh 23:1–24:31), Samuel (1Sam 25:1), Elijah (2Kgs 2:1–18), and Elisha (2Kgs 13:14–25), and, I would argue, also David (1Kgs 1:1–2:12). One might also include Gideon (Judg 8:32, though whether he is a thoroughly noble character is disputable) and the near-death of Hezekiah (2Kgs 20:1–11). For more on the conventions surrounding the noble death in the Hebrew Bible, see my forthcoming monograph, *The Death of Jacob: Narrative Conventions in Genesis 47.28–50.26*, bis (Leiden, Brill, 2015).
 - 15 Not all of these characteristics must be present, and the absence or contradiction of one or more of them does not in itself nullify the good quality of a particular death. For instance, Isaac is blind. Moses' or Joshua's deaths are not explicitly accompanied by the presence of their sons. The peacefulness of David's death is marred by the prior deaths of Amnon and

through a variety of opposing circumstances and plot points. When bad characters die badly, it is often violent, depicted as premature, and emphasizes the end of that person's family line. In the case of Samson, his life is remarkably short when compared to Abraham, Moses, and even David, since we are meant to understand him as being around 40 years old. He is a slave who has lost his strength and sight, apparently without fathering any children. His death is anything but peaceful. But even so, considering that despite these terrible odds Samson is strengthened by God to do his greatest feat of strength, could not this be an exceptional death which would not require the standard features of a good death to be considered good? Could this not be Samson's Thermopylae? Not likely.

In Hebrew narrative, with a few exceptions, a named character who dies in battle is not someone the narrator wishes to depict dying well. The named character who dies is often the leader or representative of the force opposing Israel, like Eglon, Sisera, or Goliath. Otherwise the character is an Israelite leader upon whom the judgement of Yahweh has come. Beginning with the most immediate context, the book of Judges, among the named characters who die in a battle-related context (not necessarily in battle itself), most are non-Israelites and foes of Israel. Beside Samson, the only other Israelite to die in battle is Abimelech, the evaluation of whom, and of whose death, Judges 9:56 makes explicit: "So God repaid the evil of Abimelech." The shameful features of Abimelech's death are first that he was mortally wounded by a woman (the shame of which we learn from his own mouth), but secondly that he died violently. The command to his attendant to run him through did not make it a good death, merely a less shameful one in his own opinion (but not necessarily the narrator's). Judges 9:56 has in mind all the features of Abimelech's death when it attributes the death to God. In Judges, all battle-related deaths happen to dishonourable men.

The same holds true as a rule when we expand the context to the rest of Hebrew narrative. The death of Saul in 1Sam 28:19 and 1Chr 10:13–14 (which closely parallels the death of Abimelech) also occurs in battle and is attributed explicitly to divine wrath.¹⁶ Absalom, who in the end is depicted negatively,

Absalom as well as the following death of Adonijah. Elijah is taken up at an age which we do not know, but which seems to come before others expect him to die (thus, the expectations of the other sons of the prophets in 2Kgs 2:15–18). See also George W. Coats, "Legendary Motifs in the Moses Death Reports," *cbq* 39/1 (1977), 33–44, for more 'heroic' details specific to Moses.

16 There is no way to justify Thomas Preston's interpretation of Saul's death as heroic ("The Heroism of Saul," in *The Historical Books: A Sheffield Reader* (ed. J. Cheryl Exum; The Bibli-

dies a battle-related death. The early history of the northern kingdom's royal succession is marked by constant military-related violence, which is usually explicitly connected to Yahweh's judgement. Jeroboam's son Nadab is killed for the sins of Jeroboam by Baasha while laying a siege (1 Kings 15:27–30). Baasha's son Elah is likewise killed by Zimri, his chariot commander, for his and Baasha's sins (1 Kings 16:9–14). Zimri commits suicide when under siege by Omri, and his death is attributed to his sins (1 Kings 16:18–20). Omri dies in peace, but his son Ahab dies in battle after Yahweh's judgement is announced by the prophet Micaiah (1 Kings 22:13–40).

Obviously, battlefields are not the only place a death attributed to divine retribution takes place. Unusual terminal sickness and wild animal mauling are also common signs of divine wrath in Hebrew narrative. The point is that every time a named character dies a military-related death in the Hebrew Bible there is some sort of shame associated with it. Even the threat of death for the named character reveals the implied shame, as in 2 Samuel 21:17, where David is advised not to go out to battle any more lest he die and “quench the lamp of Israel.” That David's death in battle could have been honourable or glorious is apparently not conceivable. Moreover, Saul's and Ahab's deaths show that subsequent burial in one's home is not sufficient to overcome the stigma of a shameful death. The shame of battlefield death is seen especially in what would appear to be the exceptions to my hypothesis, namely the deaths of Asahel, Uriah the Hittite, and Josiah, three deaths where divine judgement is not the cause. Of these three the most telling is Josiah's death, and for the sake of the brevity of this paper, his is the one with which we are most concerned.¹⁷

cal Seminar 40; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 122–141). The connected death of Jonathan would appear to be an exception, since Jonathan is consistently depicted positively, perhaps even more consistently than David. While Jonathan's death does not reflect the overall narratorial evaluation of him as an individual character, Jonathan's fate is tied up in the fate of his father who is the more important figure—the nature of Saul's death is what is important to the rhetoric of the books of Samuel. Jonathan dies a bad death because of the curse on Saul and his house, and his death makes Saul's death even worse.

- 17 As for the other two, Asahel's death (2 Sam 2:18–23) is depicted as a waste, something which could have and should have been avoided. Furthermore, it is important for motivating the narrative to follow. Asahel is not a main character, but he is rather a utility figure, a minor character whose sole importance is to set the stage for interactions between main characters. The second exception is Uriah the Hittite (2 Sam 11), whose death is in no way associated with judgment on him personally. The narrative goes to great length to describe the exceptional circumstances of the battle (the intentional placing of Uriah on the front lines and the lack of wisdom in the way Joab fights the battle). With rare exceptions, casualties in battle reports in Hebrew narrative are only given for the losing side. Furthermore,

The death of King Josiah in battle against Pharaoh Necho is depicted, with slightly differing details, in 2 Kings 23:29–30 and in 2 Chronicles 35:20–24. Interestingly, both narratives seem concerned to portray Josiah's death as exceptional and to provide an explanation for it. The prophecy of Huldah, which is prominent in both narratives, explains that judgement is coming on Judah despite Josiah's penitence because of other sins which are too old and too serious. Josiah, it is prophesied, will die in peace, but in the context this apparently means merely that Josiah will not see the destruction coming to Judah and Jerusalem. The reader has been prepared to expect that Josiah's death, however it is to come, is an act of mercy from Yahweh toward him specifically. Because this prophecy prepares the reader for Josiah's coming death, we are justified in inferring that it otherwise would be a shameful thing. The disparity between the two accounts in the detail of exactly where Josiah was when he died may reveal some of the lingering discomfort Josiah's death created in the Israelite mind. For the narrator of Kings, no more explanation for Josiah's death on the battlefield is needed—thereby he avoids seeing the calamity to come. For the narrator of Chronicles, Josiah's death is not sufficiently peaceful unless he dies not on the battlefield but in his home city.¹⁸ The point, though, is that in both narratives Josiah's death in battle is naturally felt to be a shameful thing, one usually indicative of divine judgement, whose disgrace must be mitigated somehow. It is an exception that proves the rule concerning death in battle in Hebrew narrative by revealing what the authors felt was needed to preserve Josiah's good reputation.

Returning to Samson, all this data calls into question the consistently positive spin typically given his death by commentators for the last two millennia. Samson's death is a death in battle. In view of the universal witness of Hebrew narrative elsewhere, this fact by itself should make our interpretation veer toward seeing it as shameful, indicative of the displeasure of Yahweh. But even within the narrative itself there are other factors which cast a shadow on this scene and make it clear that Samson's death is not another exception to the rule like Josiah's.

First, even Samson does not consider it to be a good thing for his own death to come as a result of a great slaughter of Philistines. In Judges 15:18, he has

named characters who die in battle are always on the losing side, the battle in which Uriah loses his life was ultimately not successful in taking the city. The narrative is at pains to show that Joab practically had to throw the battle in order to get Uriah killed. There is shame in this story, but not for Uriah. It is for David and Joab.

- 18 Perhaps an ironic play on the name of Jerusalem: Josiah dies in "peace", in *shalom/salem*. Christine Mitchell, "The Ironic Death of Josiah in 2 Chronicles," *cbq* 68/3 (2006), 423.

just slain 1000 Philistines, and as a result he becomes extremely thirsty, to the point that he complains he is going to die.¹⁹ Samson's prayer to Yahweh implies that if he were to die, it would be a shameful thing. This is a far cry from Solon's second example of a good death, where two young men pull their mother to a festival in a cart like oxen and then die of exhaustion, or from the rather confused story of the aftermath of the battle of Marathon, in at least one version of which the runner who runs to Athens and reports the victory promptly dies of exhaustion. Unlike this attitude which sees dying as a result of accomplishing a great feat to be a noble death, Samson's attitude is completely consonant with Hebrew narrative conventions in seeing such a thing as shameful.

Second, contrary to the united witness of ancient Christian interpretation, Samson is not portrayed as repenting, at least not in the Christian sense of the word. Samson does turn to Yahweh, but he shows no sign of having changed toward what a Judge is supposed to be, which is a leader of Israelites whose concern is national in scope. Samson's scope all along has been restricted only to his own interests, and consonant with that failing his desire for vengeance is for himself, not for Israel.²⁰

Third, Samson last words are, "Let me die with the Philistines." Final words are always significant in a death narrative. This is especially true of Samson's final words if Klein is right that Samson's death is an ironic twist to the "Testament of the Dying Hero" type-scene, whose central feature is the testament, or final will or blessing. Why should these words come from his mouth? What do they reveal about Samson? Is Samson strengthening himself to die the good death, as Pseudo-Philo's paraphrase interprets the scene? On the contrary, I am inclined toward Block's understanding which sees in these words Samson's final self-identification with the Philistines.²¹ The shame of living with the enemy, as Samson has done, finds its climax in the emphatic shame of dying with the enemy, surrounded by them, perhaps, as a kind of adopted dysfunctional family.

Fourth, few would question whether the destruction of the temple of Dagon and the Philistines therein should be understood as a victory for Yahweh, but it

19 I consider it better to take this evaluation at face value. It is difficult to justify turning this into petulant hyperbole.

20 Jost's defense of the verb *nāqam* as a standard verb for justice is all well and good as far as that goes, but Samson's motivations for justice remains limited to injuries sustained by himself alone. The point is not the baseness of desiring vengeance, but the limitation of scope ("God of Love/God of Vengeance," 117–125).

21 Block, *Judges*, 469.

is not at all clear that a victory for Yahweh is automatically a victory for Samson. Considering the increasingly sparse role Yahweh plays in the narratives of Judges following chapter seven, and the highly ambiguous role Yahweh plays in chapter 20, the fortunes of Yahweh and Israel (and her Judges) have been in the process of parting ways from early on, perhaps as early as chapter four, but definitely since chapter ten.²² In what follows the Samson story, those fortunes appear to be totally separated.²³ While Yahweh overcomes, Samson can and does meet an ignominious death.

But what about the narrator's statement that the number of people that Samson killed in his death were greater than the number that he killed in his life? Even this is not as unambiguously positive as it would on the surface appear. Woodenly calculating the numbers, this would mean that Samson killed fewer than 6,000 Philistines in his entire life. Now, for one person, even in the Bible, that is quite a large figure, but only when our scope is the activity of one person. When we look at the numbers of enemy combatants killed in other stories in Judges, the insignificance of this number becomes clear: 10,000 Perizzites (1:4), 10,000 Moabites (3:29), 900 chariots and all the enemy soldiers (4:15), 120,000 men (8:10), and 20 cities (11:33). And these casualties all happen over the relatively shorter course of a single battle or campaign, not over the course of 20 years. Samson's 6,000 begins to look rather pathetic in comparison. The fact is that we finally see at Samson's death the reason and meaning for the word play in chapter 13, which prophesied that Samson would begin to deliver Israel. The work to which he was called remains unfinished at his death. And as with Saul and Ahab, the shame of his death is not mitigated merely by the burial of his body in his home territory.

Admittedly, the scene is not capable of one-dimensional interpretation. It is complicated, as indeed all of the book of Judges is complicated. Several things are happening in the death of Samson. Certainly, Yahweh is achieving a victory over the Philistines and over their god, Dagon. But does Yahweh's victory redeem the shame of Samson's violent death in battle? While the history of the interpretation of the Samson story, influenced by ideologies foreign to the biblical text, has answered yes to that question, the conventions of biblical narrative argue strongly in the negative. A violent death in battle is, according to ancient Hebrew literary convention, an inherently shameful death whose

22 J. Cheryl Exum, "The Centre Cannot Hold: Thematic and Textual Instabilities in Judges," *cbq* 52/3 (1990), 410–429.

23 Wong's understanding of the phrase "there was no king in Israel," which is that this refers to the absence of Yahweh's divine kingship, is consistent with my understanding of the end of Judges (*Compositional Strategy*, 191–223).

shame is not overcome by certain other attending positive features, like proper burial. Although Samson's death is complicated and dramatic, it is not "not inglorious."

No Gods Made with Hands: Pauline Idol Polemics

Rebekah M. Devine

1 Introduction

In Acts 19, we read that Paul's theology of cultic images sparked a riot amongst the artisans of temple accouterments at Ephesus, for Paul claimed that "those produced through hands are no(t) gods" (οὐκ εἰσὶν θεοὶ οἱ διὰ χειρῶν γινόμενοι) (Acts 19:26). This intriguing pericope serves as an apt starting point for our discussion because it aligns Paul with the ancient Israelite prophets who derided the gods of the nations as nothing more than the product of human hands. It also demonstrates the conceptual connection between a deity's supposed "hand-made-ness" and its "no(t)-god-ness," so to speak, in Yahwistic idol-polemics.

The goal of this study is to pursue the Septuagintal usage of two terms found in the pauline¹ epistles and consider how this background might illuminate Paul's so-called "narrative thought-world."² The phrase "no(t) gods" crops up in Israelite prophetic literature a number of times, and Paul in Galatians

1 Though I think that Paul is likely the author of Colossians and Ephesians, my argument does not depend on genuine pauline authorship. What is more pertinent for our purposes here is whether or not these letters can be considered thematically pauline, whether written by Paul or a pseudepigraphic writer. For a case for their authenticity, see Peter T. O'Brien, *Colossians, Philemon* (Waco: Word Books, 1982), xli–xliv; and Peter T. O'Brien, *The Letter to the Ephesians* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 4–47. For readings of Colossians as deuteropauline literature, see Margaret Y. MacDonald, *Colossians and Ephesians*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington (Collegeville: The Liturgical Press, 2000), 4–10; and James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 35–39.

2 Keesmaat observes that Paul's use of Scripture is described by a number of scholars as "a process of word-linked 'proof-texting', where Paul needs something authoritative so he runs through the scriptural texts in his mind (as though they were a concordance) in order to cull out the appropriate proof for the point which he is making." Sylvia C. Keesmaat, *Paul and his Story: (Re)Interpreting the Exodus Tradition* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 32. Recently, however, several scholars have argued that Paul's use of Scripture is far more "organic" than some have supposed and that Paul's scriptural allusions are woven into his letters as a result of the biblical narrative(s) on his mind. For examples of this approach, see Ben Witherington, *Paul's Narrative Thought World: The Tapestry of Tragedy and Triumph* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994); and Richard B. Hays, *Echoes of Scripture in the Letters of Paul* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989).

4:8 reminds his audience that prior to knowing God they lived in bondage “to those that by nature are no(t) gods” (τοῖς φύσει μὴ οὖσιν θεοῖς). The term (ἀ)χειροποίητος is used in the LXX³ to translate words associated with idolatry and image-making⁴ and the word also appears in Ephesians 2:11 and Colossians 2:11 in reference to circumcision. Though this discussion will focus mainly on Galatians, I will suggest that both Galatians 4 and Colossians 2 make ironic comparisons between paganism and aspects of Judaism. After examining the LXX context of these phrases, I will discuss them in reference to Justin Hardin’s exegesis of Galatians 4:10 in his book, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult*.

2 “Hand-Made” in the LXX and the ANE: A Study of χειροποίητος

The LXX uses χειροποίητος⁵ and its derivatives a total of fifteen times⁶ to replace the Hebrew words לִילִי⁷ (“idols”), אֱלֹהִים⁸ (“gods”), מִזְבֵּחַ⁹ (“sun pillar” / “incense altar”) and מִקְדָּשׁ¹⁰ (“sacred place” / “sanctuary”).¹¹ In Daniel, it is twice used to modify τὰ εἰδωλα (“the idols”), substituting τὰ χειροποίητα in place of the Aramaic words for gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood and stone, reading in English as simply “the hand-made idols.”¹² Though its negative (ἀ)χειροποίητος does not appear in the LXX, a similar idea is found in Daniel 2, which recounts Nebuchadnezzar’s dream of the image made of gold, silver, bronze, iron and

3 All LXX references are taken from Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *LXX Septuaginta*, (Stuttgart: Württembergische Bibelanstalt / Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1935).

4 O’Brien, *Ephesians*, 186; Eduard Schweizer, *The Letter to the Colossians*, trans. Andrew Chester (London: SPCK, 1982), 140.

5 Another related demarcation of objects associated with image-making and idolatry is the phrase “work(s) of hands” (ἔργον / ἔργοις χειρῶν), whether “of men” (ἀνθρώπων) or “of a craftsman” (τεχνίτου), e.g., Deut 4:28; 27:15; 31:29; 1 Kgs 16:7; 2 Kgs 19:18; 22:17; 34:25; 1 Chr 32:19; Ps 113:12; 134:15; Isa 2:8; 17:8; 37:19; Hos 14:4; Mic 5:12; Jer 1:16; 10:9; 26:5; 44:8; 51:8.

6 Three of these references are found in the Apocrypha, e.g., Bel (TH) 1:5; Jdt 8:18; Wis 14:8.

7 Lev 26:1; Isa 2:18; 10:11; 19:1; 31:7; 46:6; Dan 5:4; 5:23; 6:28. Other words in the LXX used to substitute לִילִי include derivatives of εἰδωλον (Lev 19:4; 1 Chr 16:26; Ps 96:7) and θεοῦς (Isa 19:3).

8 Isa 21:9.

9 Lev 26:30.

10 Isa 16:12.

11 I am indebted to Benjamin Giffone for first bringing these to my attention.

12 Dan 5:4. Dan 5:23 substitutes in the same fashion yet adds τῶν ἀνθρώπων after τὰ χειροποίητα. In 6:28, an addition not found in the MT, the term simply modifies τὰ εἰδωλα.

clay. In his dream, Nebuchadnezzar watches as a stone is “cut from a mountain without hands” (ἐτμήθη¹³ λίθος ἐξ ὄρους ἄνευ χειρῶν) and this stone breaks the image into pieces (2:34). According to Daniel’s interpretation of the dream, the stone cut ἄνευ χειρῶν (“without hands”) symbolizes a kingdom established by God which will break other kingdoms into pieces and stand forever (2:44–45).

The term χειροποίητος and its ideological twin, ἔργοις χειρῶν (“works of hands”), must be examined in the broader context of how image-making was viewed in ancient Mesopotamia, and the religio-political significance of cult images should also be considered. As Michael B. Dick has observed in numerous writings on the making of cult images in the ANE, the assertion that an image was not a god but, in fact, the product of human hands was “at the heart of the biblical assault on the divine statue.”¹⁴ To call a god “hand-made” was a pernicious gibe because a Mesopotamian theology of cult images holds that humans are incapable of making gods.¹⁵

13 From τέμνω (“to cut”), cf. περιτέμνω (“to cut around” or “circumcise”) in Colossians 2. The author may be echoing Dan 2.

14 Michael B. Dick, introduction to *Born in Heaven, Made on Earth: The Making of the Cult Image in the Ancient Near East*, ed. Michael B. Dick (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1999), x.

15 Dick, introduction to *Born in Heaven*, x. Studies of the rituals performed on Babylonian cult images during mouth-cleansing (*mīs pī*) ceremonies show that great pains were taken to eliminate traces of human craftsmanship. In some cases, this included the ceremonial sinking of the carpenter’s tools in the river to symbolize the fact that the god of artisans had reclaimed the tools that he had used in the making of the image, showing that it was the god, not the human artisan who had crafted the image. Another part of such ceremonies involved symbolically “cutting off” the hands of the artisans with a wooden tamarisk sword as they swore that the image had not been made by them but by their respective craft deities. Thus the image was viewed not as a human creation, but as an act of divine creation. For more details on the *mīs pī* ceremony and the relationship between the cult image and its deity, see Angelika Berlejung, “Washing the Mouth: The Consecration of Divine Images in Mesopotamia,” in *The Image and the Book: Iconic Cults, Aniconism, and the Rise of Book Religion in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, ed. Karel van Der Toorn (Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 1997), 55; Michael B. Dick, “The Relationship between the Cult Image and the Deity in Mesopotamia,” in *Intellectual Life of the Ancient Near East: Papers Presented at the 43rd Rencontre assyriologique internationale, Prague, July 1–5, 1996*, ed. Jiri Posecky (Prague: Oriental Institute, 1998), 114; Christopher Walker and Michael B. Dick, “The Induction of the Cult Image in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Mesopotamian *mīs pī* Ritual,” in *Born in Heaven*, 79; and Victor Avigdor Hurowitz “The Mesopotamian God Image, From Womb to Tomb,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 123, no. 1 (Jan-Mar 2003): 152.

What should be highlighted for our purposes here is that the idol-fabrication passages of Deutero-Isaiah which mock image-making are not just religious polemics but political as well. Though Paul might not have been familiar with the precise workings of Mesopotamian image-making processes, he was certainly intimately acquainted with the Book of Isaiah and Isaiah 49 appears to be very important for Paul's ruminations in Galatians. Further, the insistence on aniconic worship was (and is) one of the hallmarks of Judaism. As will be explored in more detail later, Israel's idolatrous worship of foreign gods (embodied in hand-made cult images) is portrayed by the Israelite prophets as a primary reason for the exile.

3 "No Gods" in the LXX: A Study of μή οὖσιν θεοῖς

That Mesopotamian cult images had social and political connotations as well as religious can be illustrated by turning to a phrase Paul uses in Galatians 4:8 and examining its use in the LXX and its relation to "hand-made-ness." As mentioned in the introduction, Paul writes that the Galatians were formerly subject "to those that by nature are no(t) gods" (τοῖς φύσει μή οὖσιν θεοῖς).¹⁶ There are over thirty-seven places in the LXX where μή¹⁷ οὖσιν θεοῖς or a similar phrase appears.¹⁸ About half of these verses focus on the incomparability of Yahweh to other gods, declaring that there is "no god" like or beside Yahweh.¹⁹ The rest of these verses use the term more like Paul does: as an invalidation

16 Ben Witherington, *Grace in Galatia: a commentary on St. Paul's letter to the Galatians* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1998), 297. I concur with Witherington that it is best to take φύσει μή οὖσιν as an adjectival phrase limiting the word θεοῖς, and not substantively with θεοῖς as the predicate. For variations on this view, see Clinton E. Arnold, "Returning to the Domain of the Powers: 'Stoicheia' as Evil Spirits in Galatians 4:3, 9," *Novum Testamentum* 38, no. 1 (Jan 1996): 60; and Justin K. Hardin, *Galatians and the Imperial Cult: A Critical Analysis of the First-Century Social Context of Paul's Letter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008), 125–126. Hardin suggests that Paul was relegating the gods' existence to the human convention of acknowledging the gods, as in the deification of Roman emperors who were declared divine by the Roman Senate.

17 Some verses use the negative οὐ rather than μή.

18 Two of these depict Elijah's rhetorical rebuke towards king Ahaziah, king of Samaria, for enquiring of Baal-zebub since "there is no god in Israel" (μή εἶναι θεόν ἐν Ἰσραὴλ) (2 Kgs 1:3, 6).

19 Deut 5:7; 32:39; 2 Sam 7:22; 2 Kgs 5:15; Isa 43:10; 44:6; 45:14; Dan 3:96; Odes Sol. 2:39. In some cases, the comparison is between Yahweh and a human ruler (cf. Isa 31:3; Ezek 28:2, 9; 2 Kgs 5:7).

of a deity on the grounds that it is human-made and therefore inappropriate as an object of worship. In the seven verses which are, lexically, most similar to Paul's phrase, the context is idol-making whether directly or indirectly.²⁰ Hosea asserts that the calf of Samaria is "no(t) god" because a craftsman made it (Hos 8:6). Jeroboam has made "gods" for Israel (golden calves), driven out the priests of Yahweh and installed priests of "no gods" (2 Chr 13:8–9). Jeremiah declares that human-made gods are "no gods" (Jer 16:20). King Hezekiah owns that the gods of many nations are unable to deliver them from Assyria because they are "no gods" made of wood and stone, merely the works of human hands (2 Kgs 19:18; Isa 37:19).

Upon examination of the texts considered to be Deutero-Isaiah's idol-fabrication passages (Isa 40:19–20; 41:5–7; 44:9–20; 46:6–7), the political implications of cult images becomes apparent, as do the ideological connections between human-made images and prophetic denial of "god status" to cult images. Isaiah 46 contains both a mimicry of the cult image-making process and its installation in a shrine or temple (46:6–7), as well as a mocking reversal of the Babylonian New Year festival of *akitu* in which the statues of Bel (a title for Marduk²¹) and his son, Nebo, were carried in triumphal procession (46:1–2). Instead of a grand procession, Deutero-Isaiah here envisages the images of Bel and Nebo kneeling and stooping as they are carried on beasts of burden, borne away into captivity,²² most likely prisoners of Cyrus, king of Persia, who

20 2 Kgs 19:18; Isa 37:19; Jer 2:11; 5:7; 16:20; Hos 8:6, 2 Chr 13:9. While Jer 2:11 and 5:7 are not directly about image-making, they can be understood as indirectly related to image-making in light of 1:6, which states that the reason for God's judgment of Judah is that they have forsaken him and worshipped the works of their hands. The Epistle of Jeremiah, where the phrase appears nine times (Ep Jer 1:14, 22, 28, 49, 50, 51, 57, 64, 71), is about the ludicrousness of fearing gods (which are equated with their cult images) who are clothed, carried and controlled by humans. In other verses, the writers insist that it is demons who receive sacrifice and no(t) gods (cf. Deut 32:17, 21; Odes Sol. 2:17, 21; Bar. 4:7).

21 John Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55: a literary-theological commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 302. "Bel" is a title meaning "lord." It was formerly bestowed upon Marduk's father, Enlil, the god of Nippur, but was transferred to Marduk, god of Babylon, when Babylonian supremacy was established in the second millennium.

22 For discussions of the nuances in these verses, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: a new translation with introduction and commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 267; Walter Brueggemann, *Isaiah 40–66* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1998), 87; Paul Hanson, *Isaiah 40–66: Interpretation, a Bible commentary for teaching and preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1995), 113–114; Chris Franke, *Isaiah 46, 47, and 48: a new literary-critical reading* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 26; Goldingay, *The Message of Isaiah 40–55*, 304; and Westermann, *Isaiah 40–66: a commentary* (London: SCM Press Ltd, 1969), 179.

conquered Babylon in 539 B.C.E.²³ Here, the fall of Babylon is synonymous with the fall of its gods.

In Isaiah 46:5–7, the futile bowing of the worshippers before a cult image which they have paid a craftsman to make is a kind of miniature recapitulation of the longest and most famous idol-fabrication passage, Isaiah 44:9–20. These passages extol the incomparability of Yahweh, both to the would-be “gods” fabricated by craftsmen and also the craftsmen themselves who “play God” by mimicking God’s own creativity to no profitable end. The rhetorical questions which presage 40:19–20 and 46:6–7 charge the idol-fabricators with attempting to make an image/god that can compare with Yahweh and also to set themselves up as Yahweh’s equal since they, too, are, in a sense, creators. These questions are answered with the declaration that besides Yahweh there is “no god” (44:6; 45:21); trying to liken Yahweh to anything in the created world is not only futile but, as the whole of these prophetic parodies attempt to demonstrate, simply ludicrous.

4 Galatians: The Imperial Cult as a Reversal of the Exodus and Recapitulation of Exile

In Galatians 4:8–10, exile appears to play a significant role. Sylvia Keesmaat has explored in considerable detail the abundance of exodus motifs in Galatians 4²⁴ and it can be argued that the exile is, both for Deutero-Isaiah and for Paul, a frightful reversal of Israel’s exodus from Egypt. The covenant curses of Deuteronomy, which feature prominently in Paul’s argument in Galatians 3, reveal that the fullness of the curse culminated in the exile and Israel’s bondage to pagan gods they did not know.

Justin Hardin suggests that the story of Israel’s exile and bondage to idols is, in fact, part of the background to Paul’s argument in 3:19–4:10. In Hardin’s study of the prevalence of the imperial cult in Galatia, he argues that because of the precarious social status of the Galatian Gentile Jesus-followers, some had begun to consider becoming circumcised (in order to avoid participation in emperor worship) while others at Galatia had actually begun to once again

23 There is some debate as to the precise picture painted in 46:1–2. Some think it depicts the capture of these cult images from Babylon by its conquerors (presumably Cyrus, alluded to in v. 11), while others think the intended scene is the frantic gathering of the cult images by their worshippers who wish to bear them to safety at the approach of Cyrus.

24 Keesmaat, “Exodus and Tradition in Galatians,” in *Paul*, 155–188.

observe the emperor's festal calendar.²⁵ Because Gentile Jesus-followers were not Jews (and therefore not exempt from imperial worship), they had the choice of either adopting circumcision and Jewish social status or returning to imperial worship as they had done prior to knowing God.²⁶

Instead of viewing Paul's argument in 3:19–4:10 as an ironic comparison between paganism with the Jewish law (a widely accepted idea), Hardin suggests that Israel's enslavement under the στοιχεῖα²⁷ refers to the pagan gods they followed, which resulted in Israel's exile. According to the covenant curses of Deuteronomy 27–29, the climax of the curse was exile in which Israel would be enslaved to foreign gods.²⁸ Thus, Hardin asserts that Paul is comparing the Galatians' devotion to imperial worship with Israel's devotion to pagan gods, which resulted in the Babylonian captivity. Hardin argues that the "... Gentiles were slaves under the same στοιχεῖα through their active worship of pagan gods, but here Paul makes no inherent link between the Mosaic Law and paganism."²⁹ Hardin thus reads 4:10 as reference to the imperial, rather than Jewish, calendar.

Though Hardin's observations on the exilic background of Galatians 3:19–4:10 and his hypothesis about the imperial cult's role in the Galatian crisis are persuasive, his conclusion that Paul is *not* here comparing torah observance with paganism is unnecessary. In fact, his argument that Paul was addressing the Galatians on two fronts (on the one hand, pressure to be circumcised and, on the other, temptation to embrace the imperial cult) would only be strengthened by such a comparison, for it would show that Paul thinks his readers are choosing between two kinds of enslaving στοιχεῖα: torah-στοιχεῖα (through circumcision and torah-observance) and imperial-στοιχεῖα (by observing the emperor's festal calendar).

Though there is not sufficient space here to work out all of Paul's argument leading up to Galatians 4:8–10, a few words are necessary on how the preceding

25 Hardin, *Galatians*, 146.

26 Hardin, *Galatians*, 146.

27 Attempts to determine the precise meaning of this word and its placement both in Galatians 4 and Colossians 2 has produced a massive quantity of secondary literature. It is commonly translated as "elementary principles" or "elemental spirits." "The original sense of the term στοιχεῖον was something which was part of a series or larger entity. Thus for instance it could refer to a letter in the alphabet, or a part of a word, such as a syllable, or degrees on a sundial." Witherington, *Grace*, 284. The word has variously been thought to refer to the elementary forms of religion, whether torah or paganism (see Garlington, *An Exposition*, 236–237), the fundamental principles or teachings of the world (see Witherington, *Grace*, 284) and evil spirits (see Arnold, "Returning," 57).

28 Hardin, *Galatians*, 137.

29 Hardin, *Galatians*, 137.

analogy of the law as a παιδαγωγός³⁰ in 3:19–4:10 has been interpreted. This analogy likens the Jewish law to a παιδαγωγός who watches over the child-heir until he comes of age and can receive the inheritance from his father. Until then, however, the heir is essentially in the same position as a slave. The primary difficulty of interpretation lies in 4:3, where Paul applies this analogy to himself and his fellow Jewish Jesus-followers: “So with us; while we were minors, we were enslaved to the elemental spirits [στοιχεῖα] of the world” (NRSV). Is Paul here equating captivity under the law with bondage under the στοιχεῖα of paganism? This is how most have understood the flow of Paul’s thought from 3:19 onward.³¹

This traditional line of argumentation may be summarized like this: 1) the law as the παιδαγωγός of the Jews effectually made them slaves until the coming of Messiah; 2) the Galatian Gentiles were likewise enslaved to pagan deities before coming to a knowledge of God; 3) now that the Galatians have been freed from slavery to pagan deities, why would they wish to submit to another kind of slavery by embracing circumcision and law-keeping? As Garlington puts it, “... [Paul] now comes to stress in rather shocking terms that life under the law is no better than his readers’ former bondage to idols. The one form of idolatry is as bad as the other! They might as well have never left paganism!”³² Thus, the reference to “days, months, seasons and years” in 4:10 has most commonly been understood to refer to observance of the Jewish calendar,³³ which would mean that the Galatians were being pressured to become, in effect, Jewish proselytes who celebrated Jewish festivals and adhered to Jewish law.

However, if Paul is addressing an audience trying to make a choice between circumcision and torah-observance or participation in the imperial cult, it would make sense that Paul would wish to present both options as a kind of slavery, showing that both “circumcision” and “uncircumcision” can become forms of idolatry, even if “neither circumcision nor uncircumcision is anything; but a new creation is everything!” (cf. Gal 6:15 NRSV). If such a comparison were incorporated into Hardin’s thesis, the line of argumentation would then run something like this: 1) the law as the παιδαγωγός of the Jews effectually made them slaves until the coming of Messiah; 2) the Galatians Gentiles were

30 Though the word has sometimes been translated as “teacher,” the role of a παιδαγωγός was not to teach the child but to look after him and make sure he arrived at school, etc. One might think of a παιδαγωγός as the Greco-Roman equivalent of a babysitter.

31 James D.G. Dunn, *The Epistle to the Galatians* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 213.

32 Garlington, *An Exposition*, 244.

33 Dunn, *Galatians*, 209–230.

likewise enslaved to emperor worship (and other local deities) before coming to a knowledge of God; 3) now that the Galatians have been freed from slavery to Caesar, why would they wish to once again be enslaved, whether by observing the imperial cult or submitting to Jewish circumcision and law-keeping?

Though Witherington follows the traditional line of thought and reads Galatians 4:10 as Paul's warning not to observe the Jewish calendar, he suggests that Paul deliberately used more general language so that his readers would make a mental connection between the Jewish calendar and the imperial calendar.³⁴ Thus, their observance of the Jewish calendar would be mentally associated with their memories of the festivals and rituals in which they participated as worshippers at the emperor cult. We may take this a step further to suggest that the language is deliberately vague because Paul's hearers were facing a choice between two kinds of idolatry: Jewish and pagan.

5 Colossians: The Galatian Crisis Remixed?

While the list of observances in Galatians 4:10 is general, the list in Colossians 2:16 is distinctly Jewish, referring not just to food (βρώσει), drink (πόσει) and festivals (ἐορτῆς) but also to new moons (νεομηνίας) and sabbaths (σαββάτων). However, Hardin's argument that the Galatians were being pressured to choose between circumcision and observance of the imperial cult reminds us that the situation at Galatia was likely very complex, involving a mixture of social, religious and political concerns. The situation at Colossae certainly had its own complexities, perhaps bearing a number of similarities to the Galatian crisis, as well as distinct differences. We know from Paul's account of the 'pseudo-brethren' in Galatians 2 that the pressure for Gentile Jesus-followers to become circumcised was not unique to Galatia. However, the specific reasons for this pressure probably varied considerably in each place and situation. At Galatia, we may identify pressure from two social groups, on the one hand, Jews bent on convincing the Gentile Galatian Jesus-followers to be circumcised in order to become proper Jewish proselytes and, on the other, their fellow Gentile Galatians who wished them to participate in the imperial cult and its civic celebrations. It may be that Paul wrote Colossians to address similar issues regarding Gentile proselytizing or wrote preemptively to avoid a repetition of the Galatian crisis at Colossae.

34 Witherington, *Grace*, 299.

While it is not within the scope of this paper to engage much of the recent literature on Colossians,³⁵ a few comments are necessary in relation to our study of χειροποίητος. A great deal has been written in an attempt to figure out the relationship between the Jewish and Gnostic elements of the letter. However, there is something to be said for the idea the Colossian “heresy” is primarily Jewish in character and that Paul is simply making an ironic comparison between paganism and Judaism. It has been suggested that Paul’s ironic style in Colossians 2 portrays Judaism as just another pagan religion, implying that if the Colossians were to follow Judaism, this would essentially be like returning to the religion they embraced prior to following Christ.³⁶

6 Conclusion

This study of the LXX’s use of χειροποίητος has demonstrated that it was likely understood as a theologically “loaded” term, capable of evoking memories of Israel’s exile and enslavement to idols. With the exception of Colossians 2:11 and Ephesians 2:11, all the NT occurrences of (ἁ)χειροποίητος denote some kind of temple/house/tabernacle/holy place.³⁷ Although a number of commentators

35 The history of scholarship on Colossians has produced many diverse theories about the rhetorical and social context of the letter. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, attempts to reconcile the letter’s references to Jewish practices with the apparent Gnostic elements lead to a plenitude of theories about the Colossian heresy: hypotheses about mystery cults (e.g., Martin Dibelius, “The Isis Initiation at Apuleius,” in *Conflict At Colossae: A Problem in the Interpretation of Early Christianity Illustrated by Selected Modern Studies*, ed. Fred O. Francis and Wayne A. Meeks, rev. ed., Society of Biblical Literature Sources for Biblical Study 4 (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1975), 61–121), Gnosticism (e.g., J.B. Lightfoot, “The Colossian Heresy,” in *Conflict*, 13–59) or some sort of Jewish-pagan syncretism (e.g., Günther Bornkamm, “The Heresy of Colossians,” in *Conflict*, 123–145). Wilson concludes that while it is clear that there are both Jewish and “Gnostic” elements in the false teaching, the diversity of theories shows that scholarship is not yet able to affirm with confidence the nature and origins of the Colossian ‘heresy’; R.McL. Wilson, *Colossians and Philemon: a critical and exegetical commentary* (London: T & T Clark, 2005), 61.

36 N.T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon: an introduction and commentary* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1986), 24–25; 120–121.

37 In Mark 14:58, those testifying against Jesus tell the chief priests and Council that Jesus said he would destroy τὸν ναὸν (“the temple”) which is χειροποίητον and in three days build another which is ἄχειροποίητον. The author of Hebrews writes that Christ entered into σκηνῆς οὐ χειροποίητου (“a tabernacle not made with hands”) (9:11) and that Christ did not enter a ἅγια (“holy place”) χειροποίητα (9:24). During Stephen’s speech, he simply says that

on Colossians and Ephesians have noted the term's association with idolatry in the LXX and also its use in the NT to denote the work of God in contrast to the work of humans,³⁸ the extent of its potentially polemic connotations has not been fully acknowledged. To refer to circumcision as being ἐν σαρκὶ χειροποιήτου (as in Ephesians 2:11) or, correspondingly, to say that Gentile Jesus-followers were circumcised with a circumcision ἀχειροποιήτω (as in Colossians 2:11), may be a way of equating the act of circumcising with idol-fabrication. As in Daniel 2, where the stone "cut without hands" breaks in pieces the great image symbolizing the idolatrous human-made kingdoms, which would set themselves up against Yahweh, the Gentile Jesus-followers at Colossae are "cut" with a "hand-less" circumcision, which shatters potential idolatrous exclusivism and overemphasis on torah and cultural Judaism.

I have sought to demonstrate that Paul's role as a parodist of idols extends to any practice or ideology which stands in opposition to the gospel proclamation that Jesus is Lord. Paul not only polemicizes against the paganism of the polytheistic Gentiles but the "hand-made" rite of circumcision imposed by Jews on Gentile Jesus-followers. In the case of Galatians, this entails both a prophetic parody of the imperial cult combined with a critique of Judaism by means of ironic comparison between slavery under the law and enslavement to emperor worship. In Colossians, Judaism is compared more generally to the rulers, powers and philosophies of the world which stand in opposition to Jesus Messiah. As the idol-fabrication passages of Deutero-Isaiah portray foreign gods as the works and puppets of human craftsmen, so Paul portrays Gentile circumcision as a human attempt to supplant God's role as the creator and ruler of human beings.

the Most High does not dwell in χειροποίητος (most English translations insert the word "houses" in order to fit the quotation from Isa 66:1–2) (Acts 7:48). Similarly, in Paul's speech at Athens, he says that the God who made the world does not dwell in χειροποίητοις ναοῖς ("temples made with hands") (Acts 17:24). Paul also writes to the Corinthians of an earthly, destructible σκηνούς ("tabernacle") in contrast to an οἶκον ἀχειροποίητον ("house not made with hands") from God (2 Cor 5:1).

38 E.g., O'Brien, *Ephesians*, 186; O'Brien, *Colossians*, 115–116; and Schweizer, *Colossians*, 140.

PART 2

Pseudepigrapha & Dead Sea Scrolls



Quotations from Lost Books in the Hebrew Bible: A New Translation and Introduction¹

James R. Davila

Quotations from and references to lost Old Testament pseudepigrapha—books attributed (probably fictionally) to biblical characters or set in the biblical period—appear in the Hebrew Bible itself. The biblical books refer not infrequently to lost song collections, historical chronicles, and priestly and prophetic works. This paper collects all of these references.

Contents

The quotations from the Hebrew Bible collected here are of otherwise lost literary works attributed to a biblical character or presented as having been written in the biblical period. I have limited the translated citations to those that I judge have a reasonable chance of once having existed as a separate source apart from the document that cites it, although in this introduction I do briefly note all potentially relevant citations in the Hebrew Bible. The fragments are quoted in the order of their appearance in the Bible, except that passages that refer, or may refer, to the same work are grouped together with the first appearance of the work. The Book of Numbers has a poetic quotation from the Book of the Wars of Yahweh, as well as quotations of two other poetic fragments that may come from the same source. First Samuel quotes a lament attributed to David, which comes from the Book of the Righteous. Poetic fragments in Joshua and 1 Kings may come from the same source. In 1 Samuel there is also mention of a didactic work of guidance for kings, which was attributed to the prophet Samuel. In 1–2 Kings we find a reference to sapiential and scientific observations of Solomon, the Book of the Acts of Solomon, and numerous citations of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah, which seem to have been annalistic works with parallels in Mesopotamian literature. In 1–2 Chronicles there are numerous prophetic

¹ A slightly different version of this paper has been published in *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha: More Noncanonical Scriptures*, volume one (ed. Richard Bauckham, James R. Davila, Alexander Panayotov; Eerdmans, 2013), 673–698.

source citations, most of which probably came from a single compendium of a combination of the two annalistic works cited in 1–2 Kings, perhaps with some additions. The Chronicler also cites annalistic or genealogical and priestly sources attributed to the time of David and Solomon, as well as a collection of laments assigned to the prophet Jeremiah and others. Each of these lost documents is discussed briefly below.

Manuscripts and Versions

For the text of each of the quotations I have consulted the standard text of the Hebrew Bible (the Masoretic Text or MT) and the ancient Greek translation (the Septuagint or LXX). Unfortunately, none of the biblical manuscripts from Qumran preserve material from any of these passages. On rare occasions I cite other ancient translations when they offer a reading of particular interest.

The Texts

Lost Books Cited in the Pentateuch

There are three quotations of lost works in Numbers 21. The first is a truncated four-line poetic excerpt from the Book of the Wars of Yahweh, which excerpt contains some obscure geographical information. The context is the wandering of the Israelites near the border of Moab (21:10–13) after a conflict with the Canaanites (21:1–3) and the punishment of the Israelites with fiery serpents after their grumbling about their rations (21:4–9). The citation begins with “therefore,” implying that the context of the quoted poetic fragment is the same as that of vv. 10–13. Not enough of the quoted poem survives for us to speculate usefully on its genre, but the title of the book implies that it was an epic recounting of battles fought by the Israelites.

The second quotation follows immediately after the first, reporting that in a place called “Beer” (“Well”) “then Israel sang this song.” The song itself is a work song that celebrates the digging of a well, and it may have been traditional for this purpose. No source is cited, but given its proximity to the quotation from the Book of the Wars of Yahweh, it is reasonable, if inconclusive, to assume that it came from this book as well.

The third quotation comes after the account of a devastating defeat of Sihon, king of the Amorites, by the Israelites (21:21–25). The account notes that Sihon had inflicted a similar defeat on an unnamed Moabite king (21:26), then introduces the quotation with “therefore the poets say” (21:27a). Remarkably,

the quoted poem appears to be an Amorite victory song celebrating the defeat of the Moabites, quoted here to underline the accomplishment of the Israelites in vanquishing such a formidable foe as Sihon.² This song too may come from the Book of the Wars of Yahweh, but there is no way to be sure.

Lost Books Cited in The Deuteronomistic History

The Deuteronomistic History is the prose account of the history of Israel from the time of Joshua to the destruction of the kingdom of Judah (Joshua, Judges, 1–2 Samuel, and 2 Kings, not including Ruth). This work was written by a single author or school much influenced by the Book of Deuteronomy. Several lost documents are quoted in it.

The Book of the Righteous (The Book of Jashar) or The Book of the Song

This book is quoted at least once, and perhaps two or three times in the Bible. The meaning of the adjective translated as “righteous” is uncertain in this context. Its basic meaning is “straight” and by extension “upright,” “just,” or “righteous.” What or who is straight or righteous is unclear: perhaps either the heroic figures featured in it or the people of Israel as a whole, or even the God of Israel. The certain quotation is found in 2 Sam 1:17–18, which reports that the beautiful lament over the death of Saul and Jonathan attributed to David (1:19–27) comes from this book. The archaic language of the poem and its very specific subject matter are evidence that this could really be a piece of poetry from the hand of David himself.

Another archaic poetic passage is quoted in Joshua 10:12–13a and attributed in the Hebrew text to the Book of the Righteous. It is understood by the Deuteronomistic Historian to describe a miracle in which God stopped the motion of the sun for a day to allow the Israelites to conquer their Amorite enemies (10:13b–14). It is likely, however, that this is a misunderstanding of the cryptic poetry, probably already ancient in the time of the Deuteronomistic Historian. The placement of the moon is important in these lines as well and the most plausible understanding of the fragment is that in it Joshua calls on the sun and moon to be aligned in the sky at the same time in an oppositional arrangement propitious for the Israelites to face battle (v. 12), and then we are told that this balance of the sun and the moon occurred and caused the Israelites to defeat their enemies (v. 13a). The Mesopotamian omen literature demonstrates that periods when the sun and moon stood in the sky together

2 The classic biblical example of a victory song is Judges 5.

in opposition were regarded as either beneficial or harmful, depending on the day of the month on which this occurred.³

This is an important quotation from an early Hebrew poem, but unfortunately its derivation from the Book of the Righteous is not entirely certain, since the sentence “Is it not written in the Book of the Righteous?” is missing in the LXX. It is possible that this omission is inadvertent, but the context has nothing that would make it easy for a scribe accidentally to leave the phrase out (a “haplography”) and there would be no motivation for a scribe deliberately to delete a source attribution. On the contrary, if there was no source attribution in the verse originally, it might have been very tempting for a scribe to add one, either because the scribe had genuine information about the source, the scribe had spurious information about the source, or even that the scribe made an educated guess that the source was the same as the piece of archaic poetry quoted in 2 Sam 1:17–27.

A third passage that may quote from the Book of the Righteous is found in 1 Kgs 8:12–13 in the MT, but after 8:53 in the LXX. It attributes a brief poetic passage to King Solomon, a passage that is better preserved in the LXX than in the MT. The LXX, but not the MT, concludes with the statement, “Behold, is this not written in the Book of the Song?” It has been pointed out that in Hebrew the word “song” contains the same three letters as the word “righteous,” raising the distinct possibility that the Hebrew text behind this Greek sentence originally read “the Book of the Righteous” and was either miscopied before it reached the translator or was misread by the translator.⁴ As with the quotation in Joshua, there is no haplographic trigger that would explain the loss of the source attribution in the MT and we must reckon with the possibility that this attribution too is a secondary addition that was found in the manuscript used by the LXX translator.

Minimally, we can say that the Book of the Righteous or the Book of the Song included poetic material that was ancient in the time of the Deuteronomistic Historian (perhaps the late seventh or the sixth century B.C.E.), including a funeral dirge that may well have come from the time and even the hand of David (tenth century B.C.E.).⁵ If all three quotations come from this work,

3 Holladay, “The Day(s) the *Moon* Stood Still.”

4 Contrawise, if the citation of the Book of the Righteous in Joshua 10:13 is secondarily dependent on 2 Sam 1:18, it is possible that the original name of the work was “the Book of the Song” and the title in 2 Samuel is the one with the error, which was copied by the scribe who inserted the reference into Joshua. The title the Book of the Song would be very appropriate for the surviving quotations.

5 See 2 Sam 3:33–34 for another funeral dirge.

it apparently also contained battle poetry attributed to Joshua,⁶ which was archaic enough that its original meaning was not understood by the Deuteronomist. It also included a poem about the dedication of the Temple attributed to Solomon.⁷

A number of compositions in the Middle Ages and later have been published under the name of the Book of the Righteous (the Book of Jashar), but they have no connection with the original Book of the Righteous cited in the Hebrew Bible.⁸

A Book on the Conduct of the Kingship

In 1 Samuel 8:1–22; 10:17–27; and 12:1–25 we read of the prophet Samuel's very reluctant acceptance of the new institution of kingship in Israel and of Saul as the first king. We are told in 10:25 that Samuel wrote a book on "the conduct of the kingship," which he deposited "before Yahweh," presumably in the sanctuary where the Ark of the Covenant was found. The Deuteronomistic Historian or one of the Deuteronomist's sources may have known or heard of a work attributed to Samuel concerning the kingship. If the book existed, something like its content may be reflected in 1 Sam 8:11–18; 12:6–15, as well as in the more constructive code of conduct in Deut 17:14–20.

The Sapiential Works of Solomon

The passage praising the wisdom of King Solomon in 1 Kgs 5:12–13 (Evv 4:32–33) may refer to lost literary and scientific works attributed to Solomon. There is no explicit reference to written documents; the text says that Solomon "spoke" numerous proverbs and songs and "spoke about" plant, animal, and aquatic life. These traditions may have been entirely oral, but we have other grounds for believing that the Deuteronomistic Historian had access to at least one written document attributed to Solomon with similar interests (see the next section), so it is reasonable to explore the possibility that some of the material referred to in this passage was written.

The reference to the sapiential works of Solomon comes in the paragraph in 5:9–14 (Evv 4:29–34) devoted to establishing that the wisdom that God granted to Solomon was all surpassing and all encompassing. It was greater than that of Egypt, whose reputation for wisdom stretches to dimmest antiquity and survives today. The identity of the "easterners" who were also surpassed by

6 There is too little of the poem for us to be sure of its genre, but it appears to be a victory song.

7 Again, too little of the poem remains for its genre to be certain, but it is certainly a royal song, and evidently one celebrating the founding of a sanctuary (cf. Ps 132).

8 Christensen, "Jashar, Book of," 647.

Solomon is less clear. The phrase *bene qedem* refers to tribes in the Syrian-Arabian desert (cf. Judg 6:3, 33) but the meaning may at times extend as far as Mesopotamia (cf. Gen 29:1).⁹ Solomon was also wiser than several named sages. These four men, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Dara (Darda) appear in 1 Chr 2:6 as brothers (with a fifth brother, Zimri), sons of Zerah and grandsons of the patriarch Judah (cf. Gen 38:30). It may well be, however, that the Chronicler lifted the four names from our passage in 1 Kings and placed them here, treating the term Ezrahite and the name Zerah as the same name (probably erroneously—see below). It is thus significant that another list in Chronicles mentions Levitical musicians from the time of David named Ethan and Heman, kinsmen of Asaph (1 Chr 15:17, 19; cf. 6:42) and that the heading to Psalm 88 attributes the psalm to the Levitical sons of Korah, specifically to Heman the Ezrahite, and the heading to Psalm 89 names Ethan the Ezrahite. The meaning of the term “Ezrahite” is uncertain, but may indicate a pre-Israelite native inhabitant of the land of Canaan. The traditions about these men do not seem entirely consistent or coherent, but it is clear that they were remembered for their musical skill, one aspect of ancient wisdom.

Solomon's compositions are broken down into several categories. His reputation for proverbs is well illustrated by the late attribution of the entire book of Proverbs to him in Prov 1:1. More relevant is the note in Prov 25:1, which indicates that chapters 25–29 were proverbs of Solomon transcribed in the court of King Hezekiah. This verse suggests that written collections of Solomonic proverbs were known in the pre-exilic period. Solomon's connection with songs is best known by the ascription to him of the collection of love poems in the biblical Song of Songs. As noted above, a Temple-dedication song, perhaps part of the Book of the Righteous, is also assigned to him in 1 Kgs 8:53a (LXX). It seems unlikely that the Deuteronomist actually knew written documents containing three thousand proverbs or a thousand and five songs authored by Solomon. The numbers themselves look like general terms for an unspecified but very large number; compare *The Thousand and One Nights*. Nevertheless, some of them may have been written down.

The other Solomonic compositions involve the natural world, specifically, plants, animals, birds, “crawling things” (i.e., insects and reptiles), and fish or aquatic creatures. The use of living things for illustration in sapiential instruction is well known in the biblical tradition. See, for example, Jotham's fable

9 The phrase could perhaps also mean the “ancients,” that is, people of the distant past (cf., e.g., 2 Kgs 19:25). This meaning, however, is not attested elsewhere for the phrase *bene qedem* and in any case a geographical sense fits better here with the immediately following mention of Egypt.

of the trees in Judg 9:7–15; King Jehoash's fable of the thorn bush; the sayings involving animals, crawling creatures, and birds in Prov 30:24–31; and the summary statement involving animals, birds, plants, and fish in Job 12:7–9. Such sayings may have been in mind in this verse. But the systematic listing of elements in the natural world suggests an additional possibility, not mutually exclusive with the first. A genre of wisdom literature called "onomastica" or "lists of nouns," known from ancient Egypt, consisted of long lists of related objects, including plants and animals. Onomastica evidence an early scientific interest in categorizing and classifying the diverse elements that make up reality. Not surprisingly, no examples of onomastica are preserved in the Hebrew Bible, but passages such as Job 38–39 and Psalm 148 may indicate familiarity with the genre. It is possible, then, that the Deuteronomist knew of Solomonic sayings involving nature, Solomonic onomastica focusing on the natural world, or both. These traditions could have been oral or written, but it seems more likely that onomastica would be transmitted in written form. We have no way of knowing whether Solomonic traditions known to the Deuteronomist, who lived centuries after the time of Solomon, were genuine or pseudepigraphic.¹⁰

The Book of the Acts of Solomon

The Book of the Acts¹¹ of Solomon is cited in 1 Kings 11:41 and we are told that it contained "the rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did and his wisdom." This brief note is less informative than we might wish, but it does imply that some of the material in 1 Kings 1–11 came from it, since the biblical text gives both an account of Solomon's deeds and accomplishments and illustrations of his wisdom (3:3–28; 5:9–14 [Evv 4:29–33]; 10:1–10, 23–25). It also indicates that the Book of the Acts of Solomon dealt with Solomon's wisdom as well as his deeds, which may imply that it was of a folkloric rather than, or as well as, of an annalistic nature.¹²

¹⁰ For additional discussion of this passage see Mulder, *1 Kings*, 198–205.

¹¹ The word translated "acts" (except in "acts of covenant loyalty," where the whole phrase translates a different Hebrew word) can mean either "acts" or "words" according to context and its meaning is not always clear in the titles of the sources quoted here. Most of the time it clearly refers to the acts of this or that king, but the titles in 1–2 Chronicles which refer to prophets could usually be taken either to mean their acts or their words. I have generally assumed (in accordance with the discussion below) that the Chronicler was referring to the accounts of the careers of the prophets in the larger source on the kings of Israel and Judah and have translated the word as "acts." But in a few cases "words" seemed a more appropriate meaning and I have translated accordingly.

¹² Liver argues that the Book of the Acts of Solomon was composed by a scribal sage in the

The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel

The Book of the Chronicles¹³ of the Kings of Israel is cited eighteen times in 1–2 Kings. The structure of the passages that cite it is broadly consistent. They always begin with (a) “and the rest of the acts of (the king in question) ...” The acts are sometimes filled out with vague phrases such as “and all that he did” or “and all his might” or more specific accomplishments or actions such as “and the ivory house that he built and all the cities that he built” (Ahab) or “and the conspiracy that he plotted” (Zimri, Shallum). Next (b) is an indication of the source, either “behold they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel” or “are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel?” More information on the king may be added after this citation. We are then told (c) that the king slept with his fathers. Usually, but not always (d) his place of burial is given. Finally, (e) where relevant (i.e., when the dynasty was not overthrown in the king’s generation and the king had a son), we are told that a named son succeeded the father on the throne.

The most natural reading of these citations would take them to say that at least some of the preceding material on the king in question is derived from this source and that the reader may go to the source to find additional information. This understanding is borne out by a close look at the contents of the citations in context. Some of the specific accomplishments and actions mentioned in the citations go over ground covered in the preceding section on the king: the conspiracies of Zimri and Shallum; Ahab’s mighty war-making (cf. 1Kgs 20); the conflict between Joash of Israel and Amaziah of Judah; and the recovery of Damascus and Hamath for Judah by Jeroboam II (Damascus is only mentioned in the citation, but its recovery is implied in 2Kgs 14:25). But other specific details in the citations do not appear in the preceding material: the battles fought by Jeroboam I; the mighty acts of Baasha; and the ivory house and cities built by Ahab. This lost source thus clearly contained more information than is preserved in our books of 1–2 Kings.

reign of Solomon’s son, Rehoboam (“The Book of the Acts of Solomon”). But he bases this conclusion on the assumption that he can determine which parts of 1 Kings 1–11 came from this source and he offers no genre parallels from cognate ancient Near Eastern writings to the document he claims to reconstruct. Given our lack of positive evidence for the contents of the Book of the Acts of Solomon, I do not believe that firm conclusions can be drawn about its contents or genre.

13 “Chronicles” is the generally accepted interpretive translation of the Hebrew phrase “the words/acts of the days.”

The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah

The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah is cited fifteen times in 1–2 Kings. The citation format is similar but not identical to that of the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. The citations begin with (a) “and the rest of the acts of” the king, again, sometimes expanded a little with the same bland additions and sometimes with a few substantive details such as “and the cities that he built” (Asa) or “and that he made the pool and conduit and he brought the water into the city” (Hezekiah). Then comes (b) the indication of the source, always “are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah?” Notes with additional information about the king may come after the source citations. Then we are told (c) that he slept with his fathers. Usually (d) it is specified that he was buried in the city of David (i.e., Jerusalem), but there is no mention of Hezekiah’s burial place; Manasseh and Amon are said to have been buried in a “garden of Uzza”; and Josiah’s burial place is given as his tomb in Jerusalem. Finally, (e) it is always reported that the king was succeeded by a named son (the dynastic chain of the line of David was never broken during this period, although it came close).

Our evidence indicates that the nature of the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah was essentially the same as that of the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. Some elements in the citations repeat ground covered in the preceding passage on the king, such as the cities that Asa built and the sin that Manasseh committed. Other elements are not found in the preceding passage, including the might shown by Jehoshaphat and the building projects of Hezekiah. Again, the author of 1–2 Kings seems to have used this work as a source but did not include all of the information that was in it.

Our positive evidence for the contents of these two books is limited and this fact in turn limits our ability to locate their genre. But they narrated the deeds of the kings, their military conflicts, regicidal plots against some of them, and their building projects.¹⁴ The Chronicle of the Kings of Judah evidently also made reference to sins of Manasseh. Unfortunately, no royal annals from kingdoms that spoke cognate Northwest Semitic dialects and languages (such as Moab, Ammon, Edom, and Syria/Aram) survive, but the Mesopotamian annalistic tradition does offer points of comparison.¹⁵ The best parallel to these sources in

14 Bin-Nun argues in “Formulas from Royal Records” on the basis of internal evidence in 1–2 Kings that the writer used a different source for the information on the kings of Israel and the kings of Judah, which supports the understanding of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel and the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah as two separate books. She also concludes that the Deuteronomistic Historian made use of king lists for Israel and Judah.

15 It should be noted, however, that some of the surviving Northwest Semitic royal inscrip-

1–2 Kings is found in the Chronicle of the Kassite Kings, a copy of which survives from the Late Babylonian Period, but this may be part of a Babylonian copy of the Assyrian Synchronistic Chronicle, three copies of which survive from the seventh century B.C.E. The Chronicle of the Kassite Kings deals with the much earlier conflicts between Assyria and the Kassite dynasty of Babylon in the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries B.C.E. This Chronicle describes royal military conflicts, regicidal plots, and royal building projects, and it also offers theological reflections on royal sin and divine punishment.¹⁶ It seems likely that the Chronicle of the Kings of Israel and the Chronicle of the Kings of Judah were annalistic works similar to the Chronicle of the Kassite Kings.¹⁷

*Lost Books Cited in 1–2 Chronicles*¹⁸

The Book of 1–2 Chronicles is a retelling of the history of the world from Adam to the decree of Cyrus that ended the Babylonian Exile. The first nine chapters cover the period from Adam to the career of Saul in the form of genealogies and very brief notes. The rest of the work is an annalistic account of the history of Israel from the reign of Saul to the Exile. It draws on genealogical material

tions inscribed on stone do show a similar range of interests. The Mesha Stele, written in a Moabite dialect similar to biblical Hebrew and dating to the second half of the ninth century B.C.E. deals with King Mesha's military campaigns and his building projects. He attributes past oppression by Israel to the anger of the Moabite national god Chemosh, and his own military successes to the favor of Chemosh. The stele of Bir Rakib about his father Panamuwa, erected around 730 B.C.E., gives an account in an Aramaic dialect (Samalian) of the coup in which Panamuwa's father and brothers were killed and how Panamuwa restored the dynasty because the gods looked favorably on his right conduct. A stele erected by King Zakkur of Hamath contains an Aramaic royal inscription from about 800 B.C.E. in which Zakkur reports that during a siege of his city "prophets and seers" assured him (correctly in the event) that the city would be delivered from the siege. The stele also lists some of Zakkur's building projects. (See Parker, *Stories in Scripture and Inscription*, 44–58, 83–89, 106–112). It may be that some of the conventions of the lost chronicles of the Northwest Semitic kingdoms are preserved indirectly in these inscriptions as well as in the brief notices of the contents of the sources of 1–2 Kings.

16 Glassner, *Mesopotamian Chronicles*, 278–281.

17 If we are correct in deducing (see below) that the Chronicler's main source was a digest of these two works, the careers of a number of prophets may have figured in them as well, just as in the books of 1–2 Kings. This aspect is not paralleled in the Chronicle of the Kassite Kings, but unnamed prophets and seers figure in the Zakkur inscription (see n. 14 above). But it is also possible that the Chronicler's digest incorporated material from other sources as well.

18 For useful discussions of the surviving and lost sources of the Chronicler, see Japhet, *1 & 2 Chronicles*, 14–23 and Knoppers, *1 Chronicles 1–9*, 66–71, 118–128.

in the Pentateuch and narrative material in 1–2 Samuel and 1–2 Kings. The date of 1–2 Chronicles is debated, with most dating it to somewhere in the fourth century B.C.E. or a little earlier or later. The Chronicler cites The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah three times; the nearly identical title The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel four times; the Book of the Kings of Israel twice; and the Midrash of the Book of the Kings and the Acts of the Kings of Israel once each.¹⁹ Each of these is always cited exactly in the place that corresponds to a source citation in a passage in 1–2 Kings (either of the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings or Israel or the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah), raising the suspicion for some that the Chronicler is simply making up sources to give an appearance of verisimilitude. Moreover, the Chronicler rarely cites the Pentateuch (see below) and never cites the Deuteronomistic History, although both works were central sources for 1–2 Chronicles. But the Chronicler does present information not found elsewhere in the Bible and at least some of it has been shown to be historically accurate,²⁰ so it seems unduly pessimistic to assume that the lost sources cited in 1–2 Chronicles are imaginary. That said, the similarity to the titles of the lost sources in 1–2 Kings is suggestive and it seems probable that, first, these several sources cited by the Chronicler represent a single work and, second, that this work is a digest of the two separate documents used by the Deuteronomistic Historian in 1–2 Kings.

A number of other sources are associated with (usually) named prophets, seers, and visionaries: the Acts of Samuel the Seer, the Acts of Nathan the Prophet (listed twice), the Acts of Gad the Visionary, the Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, the Visions of Jeddo the Visionary Concerning Jeroboam Son of Nebat; the Acts of Shemiah the Prophet and Iddo the Visionary for Enrollment by Genealogy, the Midrash of the Prophet Iddo, the Acts of Uzziah that Isaiah the son of Amoz wrote, and the Words of the Visionaries. All of these prophets are known from 1–2 Kings, except for the prophet Jeddo/Iddo, who appears only in Chronicles. It is tempting to assume that each of these represents a separate source, perhaps a collection of prophetic oracles like those in the biblical prophetic books, but three considerations argue against this. First, all of these sources are said to cover the acts of the reign of a particular king rather than the words of the prophet in question. Second, these prophetic sources are almost never cited alongside one of the general sources on the reigns of the kings. The only exception is the Words (or Acts) of the Visionaries (or perhaps

19 If we read with the LXX of 1 Chr 9:1, the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah is cited four times and the Book of the Kings of Israel once.

20 Vaughn, *Theology, History, and Archaeology*.

the name “Hozai”), which is cited for the reign of Manasseh immediately after the Acts of the Kings of Israel (2 Chr 33:18). Third, two references to prophetic sources, “the Words (or Acts) of Jehu son of Hanani” (2 Chr 20:34) and “the Vision of Isaiah Son of Amoz the Prophet” (2 Chr 32:32) are explicitly said to be embedded in, respectively, the Book of the Kings of Israel and the Book of the Chronicles of Judah and Israel.²¹ These factors make it likely that many or all of the prophetic sources are actually passages from the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah, cited by their main content, a format known from elsewhere in antiquity.²²

So our evidence indicates that most of the Chronicler’s citations go back to a single comprehensive source on the Divided Monarchy rather than to the initially apparent multiplicity of sources. Nevertheless, some of the Chronicler’s other citations seem to refer to additional sources. There are several set in the time of the united monarchy: the Book of the Chronicles of King David, of which we are told simply that partial census data gathered by Joab was not entered into it; King David’s plan for the Temple, apparently revealed to him by God; and writings by David and Solomon pertaining to the divisions into which the Levites were grouped. All that we know about the Book of the Chronicles of King David is that one might plausibly have found census information in it. Such records could conceivably have survived to the Chronicler’s time or, perhaps more likely, could have been reconstructed or concocted by that time. The Chronicler’s insistence that David made extensive preparations for the Temple and handed them over to Solomon does not seem particularly historically plausible given the confusion over the succession indicated in 1 Kings 1–2. We have no way of knowing how ancient the organization of the clerical functionaries in the Jerusalem Temple was, but we make take the Chronicler’s picture of one fully formed in all its details during the United Monarchy with at least a grain of salt. Nevertheless, it is entirely plausible that the priests and Levites of the Chronicler’s time had written records about such matters, which they attributed pseudepigraphically to David and Solomon and that the Chronicler consulted these records.

The one remaining source is the Laments over the fallen King Josiah, which were composed by Jeremiah (presumably the prophet) and unnamed male and female singers and which seem to have formed a standard liturgy in the Chronicler’s time. These laments are clearly not to be identified with the biblical Book

21 It should be noted, however, that the LXX of 2 Chr 32:32 makes the Vision of Isaiah a separate source from the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel.

22 For example, Exodus 3 is cited in Mark 12:26 as “in the Book of Moses about the bush” and in Rom 11:2 Paul cites 1 Kings 19 as “what the scripture says in Elijah.”

of Lamentations, since the latter are not about King Josiah. But there is no reason to doubt that such laments existed and that some of them were attributed to Jeremiah.²³

Other Sources Cited in the Hebrew Bible

It is worth noting some other written sources mentioned in the Hebrew Bible but not translated here, because they dealt with day-to-day matters and thus were not strictly-speaking literary works, or they are quoted in full and are thus not lost, or they are likely to be a composition by a biblical author rather than having existed previously on their own, or because the quotation may be from a surviving biblical book, or some combination of these reasons.

Numerous letters are quoted in the Hebrew Bible. These include the letter of David to Joab (2 Sam 11:14–15); the letters of Jezebel to the elders and nobles of Naboth's city (1 Kgs 21:8–10); the letter of the king of the Syrians to the King of Israel regarding Naaman (2 Kgs 5:5–7); the letters of Jehu to the rulers of Samaria (2 Kgs 10:1–3, 6); the letter of the King of Assyria to Hezekiah (2 Kgs 19:14//Isa 37:14; 2 Chr 32:17); the letters of the Babylonian king Merodach-baladan to Hezekiah (2 Kgs 20:12//Isa 39:1); the letter of Jeremiah to the elders of the exiles and to the priests (Jer 29:1–29); the letters of Shemiah to the people in Jerusalem and the priests (Jer 29:24–28); the letters of Ahasuerus proclaiming husbandly authority (Est 1:22); the letters of Haman against the Jews (Est 3:12–15; 4:8); letters of Mordecai in defense of the Jews (Est 8:5, 9–14); the letters of Mordecai and Esther establishing the holiday of Purim (Est 9:20–22, 27, 32); royal correspondence about the Jewish exiles in the Book of Ezra (Ezra 4:6, 7–16, 17–22; 5:6–17; 6:2b–12; 7:11–26); the letter of Sanballat to Nehemiah (Neh 6:5–7); the letter of Hiram, king of Tyre, to Solomon (2 Chr 2:11–16); and a letter from the prophet Elijah to King Jeroboam (2 Chr 21:12–15).²⁴

Other documents are mentioned as well. The Book of the Generations of Adam, cited in Gen 5:1, seems to be quoted in full and is probably a composition of the priestly writer, albeit based on earlier source material. In Exod 17:14 Yahweh has Moses write a book commemorating the annihilation of the Amalekites. In Josh 18:4, 8–10, a group of men from seven tribes of Israel wrote an account of the portion of the Land of Canaan that remained to be conquered at that point. In Josh 24:26, Joshua wrote an account of the renewed covenant

23 For the intriguing possibility that the prayer of Manasseh contained in the Acts of the Kings of Israel according to 2 Chr 22:18 has been partially preserved among the Dead Sea Scrolls in 4Q381 frag. 33, lines 8–11, see Schniedewind, "A Qumran Fragment."

24 The letters found in the Hebrew Bible are discussed by Pardee et al. in *Handbook*, 169–182.

at Shechem in the Book of the Law of God (see below). Three books containing prophetic oracles of Jeremiah are mentioned in the Book of Jeremiah. He gave one of these to his scribal assistant Baruch to read before King Jehoiakim, but the king destroyed it. Nevertheless, Jeremiah dictated its substance again and this new scroll may form part of the surviving Book of Jeremiah (Jer 36:1–28). The second book seems to consist of Jer 45:1–5, which was dictated to Baruch by Jeremiah. The third book had to do with “all the evil that is to come upon Babylon” and Baruch, at Jeremiah’s behest, threw it into the Euphrates River (Jer 51:59–64).²⁵ But its contents may be preserved in Jer 50:1–51:58. The Book of Esther mentions the Book of the Chronicles (of the Kings of Media and Persia) in Est 2:23; 6:1–2; 10:2. Although the Persian Empire surely did keep royal chronicles (cf. Ezra 5:17–6:1), it is very doubtful that the author of Esther actually had access to them or that Mordecai figured in them. The Book of Nehemiah cites a work called the Book of Chronicles, of which it says, “The sons of Levi, the heads of the fathers, are written in the Book of Chronicles, even up to the days of Johanan son of Eliashib”²⁶ (Neh 12:23). The names of the Levites in Neh 12:24–25 were probably taken from the source cited in v. 23. Genealogical material had been preserved through the Exile,²⁷ so this source is not necessarily our 1–2 Chronicles, which does, however, contain much the same information in 1 Chr 9:14–17.

In addition there are numerous references to a written Law of Moses:²⁸ Josh 1:7–8; 8:31 (cf. vv. 32–35); 23:6; 24:26a; 1 Kgs 2:3; 2 Kgs 14:6; 21:8; Mal 3:22 [Evv 4:4]; Dan 9:11, 13; Ezra 3:2; 6:18; 7:6; Neh 1:8–9; 2 Chr 17:9. A Book of the Law was reportedly discovered in the Temple in Jerusalem in Josiah’s time (2 Kgs 22–23//2 Chr 23:18; 25:4) and Ezra read a Book of the Law to the returned exiles in Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8:1–18; 13:1). When some indication of the content of the Book of the Law is given, it usually corresponds to something in our Pentateuch, but the citation in Ezra 6:18 has to do with the priestly divisions and the Levitical courses, which are not mentioned in the Pentateuch. Likewise, the words attributed to God speaking to Moses in Neh 1:8–9 are not found in the Pentateuch, although the writer may be paraphrasing Deut 30:1–5. It is generally agreed that Josiah’s Book of the Law had some

25 Jeremiah 25:11, 12 and 29:10 are also alluded to in Dan 9:2.

26 Eliashib was high priest in the time of Nehemiah (Neh 3:1). Johanan was actually his grandson (the word “son” in Hebrew can also mean “grandson”). See Neh 12:1, 10–11 for the high-priestly genealogy for this period.

27 Cf. Ezra 2:62//Neh 7:64.

28 Cf. the Book of the Covenant in Exod 24:7; and references to a written Law in Deut 17:18–19; and the Law of the Lord in 2 Kgs 10:31; 17:13; 1 Chr 16:40; and 2 Chr 12:1; 17:9.

connection with the Book of Deuteronomy. The exact relationship of Ezra's Book of the Law to our Pentateuch remains unclear. The Pentateuch went through a long and complicated editing process and differing sources and recensions were probably available to different biblical writers at different times.

Finally, there are a number of biblical passages that give the impression of being incorporated into their current position from an earlier context, although this is not explicitly stated. Many of these passages display archaic linguistic features or a discontinuity with their current context or both. They include: the Testament of Jacob (Gen 49:1–27); the Song of the Sea (Exod 15:1–18); the Song of the Ark (Num 10:35–36); the Oracles of Balaam (Num 23:7–10, 18–24; 23:3–9, 15–19, 20–24); the Song of Moses (Deut 32:1–43); the Blessing of Moses (Deut 33:2–29); the Song of Deborah (Judg 5:1–30); the Song of Hannah (1 Sam 2:1–10); and the archaic poem in Habakkuk 3:1–16.

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Appendix: Quotations from Lost Books in the Hebrew Bible

The Book of the Wars of Yahweh

¹⁴Therefore it is said in the Book of the Wars of Yahweh:

Waheb in Suphah and the seasonal streams,
the Arnon ¹⁵and the base of the seasonal streams,
which extends to the seat of Ar
and leans toward the territory of Moab.²⁹

¹⁶And from there to Beer.³⁰ It is the Beer where Yahweh said to Moses, "Gather the people that I may give them water" (cf. Num 21:4–9). ¹⁷Then Israel sang this song:³¹

Rise, O well—you all sing to it!
¹⁸The well the princes dug,
which the nobles dug,

29 The quotation appears to consist of these two poetic couplets. The context is the description of the movements of the Israelites in the wilderness before the conquest of Canaan. The words "Waheb" and "Suphah" appear to be place names, but are not otherwise known. The Arnon is the river that marks the border between Israel and Moab to the east of the Dead Sea. Ar seems to have been a city near the Arnon. My translation of this passage is sparing of emendations, but Christiansen offers a not implausible reconstruction making freer use of them in "Num 21:14–15."

30 The meaning of "Beer" is "well."

31 It is uncertain whether the quoted song was also found in the Book of the Wars of Yahweh, but the proximity of this quotation to the previous one leaves this as a distinct possibility.

with scepter,
with their staves. (Num 21:14–18a)

Excerpt from an Amorite Victory Song

²⁷Therefore the poets say:³²

Enter Heshbon, let it be built,
let the city of Sihon be founded.
²⁸For fire came out of Heshbon,
flame from the town of Sihon.
It consumed Ar of Moab,
swallowed³³ the high places of the Arnon.

²⁹Woe to you, Moab;
You have perished, people of Chemosh!
He has made his children into refugees,
put his daughters into captivity,
to the Amorite king, Sihon.
Their yoke has perished
from Heshbon as far as Dibon.

³⁰It is devastated as far as Nophah.
which is as far as Medeba.³⁴ (Num 21:27–30)

The Book of the Righteous (Book of Jashar)

¹²Then Joshua spoke to Yahweh on the day Yahweh gave over the Amorite before the children of Israel, and he said before the eyes of Israel,

“Sun be still in Gibeon
and moon in the Valley of Aijalon.” (cf. Hab 3:11)

¹³And the sun was still
and the moon stood
until the nation avenged itself on its enemies.

32 This seems to be an ancient poem that was not well understood by either the Masoretic vocalizers or the Greek translator. I have at times translated the consonantal Hebrew text differently from either.

33 “swallowed” LXX; “the masters of” MT.

34 “Medeba” MT; “Moab” LXX. The last two lines of the poem seem to be corrupt and their meaning is very uncertain.

Is it not written in the Book of the Righteous?³⁵ (Josh 10:12–13a)

¹⁷Then David composed this lament for Saul and for Jonathan his son. ¹⁸And he determined to teach it to the sons of Judah (for the use of the) bow.³⁶ Behold, it is written in the Book of the Righteous.

¹⁹Is the gazelle of Israel
slain on your high places?³⁷
How the warriors have fallen!
²⁰Do not tell it in Gath!
Do not proclaim it in the streets of Ashkelon!
Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice.
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph.
²¹Oh mountains of Gilboa,
let there be no dew and no rain upon you
nor groundswells of the deep.³⁸
For there the shield of warriors was polluted;
the shield of Saul, not anointed with oil
²²From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of warriors,
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
and the sword of Saul did not return empty.
²³Saul and Jonathan,
beloved and pleasant;
in their life and in their death
they were not parted.
They were faster than eagles,
they were mightier than lions.
²⁴Daughters of Israel, weep for Saul,
who clothed you in luxurious scarlet,
who put decoration of gold on your clothing.
²⁵How the warriors have fallen,

35 "Is it not ... Righteous?" MT; omit LXX.

36 "bow" MT; omit LXX.

37 "Is the gazelle ... slain?" MT; "Set up a monument, Israel, over those who died on your high places, wounded" LXX. The MT gives the more likely text.

38 "groundswells of the deep"; emending the Hebrew text, which reads "fields of offerings" to a graphically similar and contextually more appropriate phrase found in Ugaritic. See A.A. Anderson, 2 *Samuel* (WBC 11; Dallas, Tex.: Word, 1989), 18.

Jonathan in the midst of the battle,
slain on your high places.

²⁶I am troubled over you my brother;
Jonathan, you were very pleasant to me.
more wonderful was your love to me
than the love of women.

²⁷How the warriors have fallen
and the implements of war have been destroyed! (2 Sam 1:17–27)

¹²Then Solomon said,

“Yahweh has placed the sun in the heavens³⁹
(yet) He said he would tabernacle in deep darkness.

¹³Surely I have built an abode for You;
a foundation for You to stay in forever.”

Behold, is this not written in the Book of the Song?⁴⁰ (1 Kgs 8:12–13 MT//1 Kgs 8:53a LXX)

A Book on the Conduct of the Kingship

And Samuel spoke to the people the conduct of the kingship and he wrote it in a book and he placed it before Yahweh. And Samuel sent away all the people, each to his home. (1 Sam 10:25)

The Sapiential Works of Solomon

⁹And God⁴¹ gave very much wisdom and understanding to Solomon, and breadth of mind like the sand that is on the seashore. ¹⁰And the wisdom of⁴² Solomon was greater than the wisdom of all the easterners⁴³ and all the wisdom⁴⁴ of Egypt. ¹¹And he was wiser than anyone—than Ethan the Ezrahite,

39 “Yahweh has placed (another reading is “made known”) the sun in the heavens” LXX 1 Kgs 8:53a; omit MT.

40 Behold ... Song LXX; omit MT. The Hebrew words for “righteous” or “upright” and “song” are written with the same three consonants in a different order and it is possible that the LXX has misread the title of the book and it should be “The Book of the Righteous.”

41 “God” MT; “the Lord” LXX.

42 “the wisdom of” MT; omit LXX.

43 Or, less likely, “the ancients.” See the Introduction, n. 9.

44 “the wisdom” MT; “the sages” LXX.

and Heman and Calcol and Darda the dance masters (cf. 1 Chr 2:6; 6:42; 15:17, 19; Pss 88:1, 89:1),⁴⁵ and his fame was among the surrounding nations.⁴⁶ ¹²And Solomon spoke three thousand proverbs and his songs⁴⁷ were a thousand and five.⁴⁸ ¹³And he spoke about the trees,⁴⁹ from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop that emerges from the wall. And he spoke about animals and birds and crawling creatures and fish. ¹⁴And there came some from all the peoples⁵⁰ to hear the wisdom of Solomon, from⁵¹ all the kings of the earth who had heard of his wisdom. (1 Kgs 5:9–14 [Evv 4:29–34])

The Book of the Acts of Solomon

And the rest of the acts of Solomon and all that he did and his wisdom, are they not written in the Book of the Acts of Solomon? (1 Kgs 11:41)⁵²

The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel

And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam that he fought and which he carried out as king, behold they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. (1 Kgs 14:19)⁵³

And the rest of the acts of Nadab and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (1 Kgs 15:31)⁵⁴

And the rest of the acts of Baasha and that which⁵⁵ he did and his mighty acts,⁵⁶ are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (1 Kgs 16:5)⁵⁷

45 It seems better to take *bene mahol* as a noun phrase, “sons of dance,” hence “dance masters,” than as “sons of Mahol,” referring to an otherwise unknown person by that name.

46 “and his fame ... nations” MT LXX MSS; om LXX (Lucianic stratum).

47 “his songs” LXX; “his song” MT.

48 “a thousand and five” MT; “five thousand” LXX.

49 The word translated “trees” seems to have a range of meaning that includes both trees and smaller plants, as here.

50 “And there came some from all the peoples” MT LXX; “And all the peoples came” LXX.

51 “from” MT LXX MSS; “and he received gifts from” LXX (Lucianic stratum).

52 An account of the reign of Solomon is found in 1 Kings 1–11.

53 An account of the life and reign of Jeroboam I is found in 1 Kgs 11:26–14:20.

54 An account of the reign of Nadab is found in 1 Kgs 15:25–32.

55 “that which” MT; “all that” LXX.

56 “mighty acts” LXX; “might” MT.

57 An account of the life and reign of Baasha is found in 1 Kgs 15:27–16:6.

And the rest of the acts of Elah and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (1 Kgs 16:14)⁵⁸

And the rest of the acts of Zimri, and his conspiracy that he plotted, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (1 Kgs 16:20)⁵⁹

And the rest of the acts of Omri which⁶⁰ he did and his might that he did,⁶¹ are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (1 Kgs 16:27)⁶²

And the rest of the acts of Ahab and all that he did and the ivory house that he built and all the cities that he built, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (1 Kgs 22:39)⁶³

And the rest of the acts of Ahaziah which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (2 Kgs 1:18)⁶⁴

And the rest of the acts of Jehu and all that he did and all his might,⁶⁵ are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (2 Kgs 10:34)⁶⁶

And the rest of the acts of Jehoahaz and all that he did and his might,⁶⁷ are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (2 Kgs 13:8)⁶⁸

And the rest of the acts of Joash and all that he did and his might⁶⁹ that he fought with Amaziah, king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (2 Kgs 13:12)⁷⁰

58 An account of the reign of Elah is found in 1 Kgs 16:6–14.

59 An account of the conspiracy and reign of Zimri is found in 1 Kgs 16:8–20.

60 “which” MT; “and all” LXX.

61 “his might that he did” MT; “his might” LXX.

62 An account of the reign of Omri is found in 1 Kgs 16:16–28.

63 An account of the reign of Ahab is found in 1 Kgs 16:28–22:40.

64 An account of the reign of Ahaziah is found in 1 Kgs 22:40, 51–53, 2 Kgs 1:1–18.

65 “might” MT; + “and the conspiracy that he plotted” LXX (cf. 1 Kgs 16:20).

66 An account of the reign of Jehu is found in 2 Kgs 9:1–10:36.

67 “might,” MT; “acts of might” LXX.

68 An account of the reign of Jehoahaz is found in 2 Kgs 10:35, 13:1–9.

69 “might,” MT; “acts of might” LXX.

70 An account of the reign of the Israelite King Joash (Jehoash) is found in 2 Kgs 13:9–13.

And the rest of the acts of Jehoash⁷¹ which he did and⁷² his might and⁷³ that he fought with Amaziah, king of Judah, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (2 Kgs 14:15)⁷⁴

And the rest of the acts of Jeroboam and all that he did and his might⁷⁵ that he fought and that he returned Damascus and Hamath to Judah in Israel,⁷⁶ are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (2 Kgs 14:28)⁷⁷

And the rest of the acts of Zechariah, behold they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. (2 Kgs 15:11)⁷⁸

And the rest of the acts of Shallum and the conspiracy that he plotted, behold they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. (2 Kgs 15:15)⁷⁹

And the rest of the acts of Menachem and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel? (2 Kgs 15:21)⁸⁰

And the rest of the acts of Pekiah and all that he did, behold they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. (2 Kgs 15:26)⁸¹

And the rest of the acts of Pekah and all that he did, behold they are written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel. (2 Kgs 15:31)⁸²

71 "Jehoash" MT LXX; + "and all" Syriac.

72 "and" MT; "in" LXX.

73 "and" MT; omit LXX.

74 The entry in 2 Kings 14:15 is essentially a duplicate of the one in 2 Kgs 13:12 apart from the different spellings of the name.

75 "might," MT; "acts of might" LXX.

76 "to Judah in Israel" MT LXX; "to Israel" Syriac.

77 An account of the reign of Jeroboam II is found in 2 Kgs 13:13; 14:16, 23–29.

78 An account of the reign of Zechariah is found in 2 Kgs 14:29; 15:8–12.

79 An account of the conspiracy and reign of Shallum is found in 2 Kgs 15:10–15.

80 An account of the reign of Menachem is found in 2 Kgs 15:14–22.

81 An account of the reign of Pekiah is found in 2 Kgs 15:22–26.

82 An account of the conspiracy and reign of Pekah is found in 2 Kgs 15:25–31.

The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah

And the rest of the acts of Rehoboam and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (1 Kgs 14:29)⁸³

And the rest of the acts of Abijam and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (1 Kgs 15:7a)⁸⁴

And the rest of all⁸⁵ the acts of Asa and all his might and all⁸⁶ that he did and the cities that he built,⁸⁷ are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (1 Kgs 15:23a)⁸⁸

And the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat and his might that he did and that he fought,⁸⁹ are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (1 Kgs 22:46)⁹⁰

And the rest of the acts of Joram and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 8:23)⁹¹

And the rest of the acts of Joash and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 12:20 [Evv 12:19])⁹²

And the rest of the acts of Amaziah,⁹³ are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 14:18)⁹⁴

83 An account of the reign of Rehoboam is found in 1 Kgs 11:43–12:24; 14:21–31.

84 An account of the reign of Abijam is found in 1 Kgs 14:31–15:8.

85 “all” MT; omit LXX.

86 “and all” MT; omit LXX Syriac.

87 “and the cities that he built” MT; omit LXX.

88 An account of the reign of Asa is found in 1 Kgs 15:8–24.

89 “and that he fought” MT; omit LXX.

90 An account of the reign of Jehoshaphat is found in 1 Kgs 15:24; 22:1–51.

91 An account of the reign of the Judean King Joram (Jehoram) is found in 2 Kgs 8:16–24. There is no mention of a source for the reign of his son Amaziah (cf. 2 Kgs 9:27–28).

92 An account of the life and reign of the Judean King Joash (Jehoash) is found in 2 Kgs 11:1–12:20 [Evv 12:21].

93 “Amaziah” MT; + “and all that he did” LXX.

94 An account of the reign of Amaziah is found in 2 Kgs 12:20 [Evv 12:21]; 14:1–20.

And the rest of the acts of Azariah and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 15:6)⁹⁵

And the rest of the acts of Jotham which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 15:36)⁹⁶

And the rest of the acts of Ahaz⁹⁷ which he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 16:19)⁹⁸

And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and all his might and that he made the pool and the conduit and he brought the water into the city, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 20:20)⁹⁹

And the rest of the acts of Manasseh and all that he did and the sin that he committed, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 21:17)¹⁰⁰

And the rest of the acts of Amon¹⁰¹ that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 21:25)¹⁰²

And the rest of the acts of Josiah and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 23:28)¹⁰³

And the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and all that he did, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah? (2 Kgs 24:5)¹⁰⁴

95 An account of the reign of Azariah (Uzziah) is found in 2 Kgs 14:21–22; 15:1–7 (cf. Isa 1:1; 6:1; Amos 1:1; Zech 14:5).

96 An account of the reign of Jotham is found in 2 Kgs 15:7, 32–38.

97 “Ahaz” MT MSS LXX MSS; + “and all” MT MSS LXX (Lucianic stratum) Syriac.

98 An account of the reign of Ahaz is found in 2 Kgs 15:38–16:20.

99 An account of the reign of Hezekiah is found in 2 Kgs 16:20; 18:1–20:21.

100 An account of the reign of Manasseh is found in 2 Kgs 20:21–21:18.

101 “Amon” MT MSS LXX MSS; + “and all” MT MSS LXX (Lucianic stratum) Syriac.

102 An account of the reign of Amon is found in 2 Kgs 21:18–26.

103 An account of the reign of Josiah is found in 2 Kgs 21:24, 26–23:30. No source is given for the reign of Jehoahaz (2 Kgs 23:30–34).

104 An account of the reign of Jehoiakim is found in 2 Kgs 23:34–24:6.

The Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah

And the rest of the acts of Jotham and all his wars¹⁰⁵ and his ways, behold they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. (2 Chr 27:7)¹⁰⁶

²⁶And the rest of the acts of Josiah and his acts of covenant loyalty according to what is¹⁰⁷ written in the Law of Yahweh ²⁷and his words,¹⁰⁸ first and last, behold they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah. (2 Chr 35:26–27)¹⁰⁹

And the rest of the acts of Jehoiakim and his abominations and what was found out about him,¹¹⁰ behold they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.¹¹¹ (2 Chr 36:8a)¹¹²

The Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel

And behold, the acts of Asa, first and last, behold they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel (2 Chr 16:11)¹¹³

And the rest of the acts of Amaziah, first and last, are they not, behold, written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel? (2 Chr 25:26)¹¹⁴

And the rest of his [Ahaz's] acts and all his ways, first and last, behold they are written in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. (2 Chr 28:26)¹¹⁵

And the rest of the acts of Hezekiah and his acts of covenant loyalty, behold they are written in the vision of Isaiah son of Amoz the prophet¹¹⁶ in the Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel. (2 Chr 32:32)¹¹⁷

105 “and all his wars” MT; “and the war” LXX.

106 An account of the reign of Jotham is found in 2 Chr 26:23–27:9 (cf. 2 Kgs 15:36 above).

107 “according to what is” MT; omit LXX.

108 Perhaps emend “words” to the similar looking “ways” (cf. 2 Chr 27:7 above).

109 An account of the reign of Josiah is found in 2 Chr 33:25–35:27 (cf. 2 Kgs 23:28 above).

110 “and his abominations ... about him” MT; “and all that he did” LXX (influenced by 2 Kgs 24:5).

111 “the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah” MT; “the Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah” LXX (influenced by 2 Kgs 24:5).

112 An account of the reign of Jehoiakim is found in 2 Chr 36:4–8 (cf. 2 Kgs 24:5 above).

113 An account of the reign of Asa is found in 2 Chr 14:1–16:14 (cf. 1 Kgs 15:23 above).

114 An account of the reign of Amaziah is found in 2 Chr 24:27–25:28 (cf. 2 Kgs 14:18 above).

115 An account of the reign of Ahaz is found in 2 Chr 27:9–28:27 (cf. 2 Kgs 16:19 above).

116 “prophet” MT; + “and” LXX.

117 An account of the reign of Hezekiah is found in 2 Chr 28:27–32:33 (cf. 2 Kgs 20:20 above).

The Book of the Kings of Israel

And all Israel was enrolled by genealogy and behold they are written in the Book of the Kings of Israel. And Judah were exiled to Babylon for their unfaithfulness.¹¹⁸ (1 Chr 9:1a)¹¹⁹

And the rest of the acts of Jehoshaphat, first and last, behold they are written in the Words of Jehu son of Hanani which is entered in the Book of the Kings of Israel. (2 Chr 20:34)¹²⁰

The Book of the Chronicles of King David

²³But David did not hold a census of those from twenty years old and above, for Yahweh promised to multiply Israel like the stars of the heavens (cf. Gen 22:17; 26:4). ²⁴Joab son of Zeruiah began to count them up¹²¹ but he did not finish, but by this there came about wrath upon Israel and he did not enter the number into the Book¹²² of the Chronicles of King David. (1 Chr 27:23–24)¹²³

King David's Plan from Yahweh for the Temple

He (David) instructed (Solomon) in everything in a writing from the hand of Yahweh concerning it,¹²⁴ all the workmanship of the plan. (1 Chr 28:19)¹²⁵

For Isaiah son of Amoz see 2 Kgs 19:20–20:19//Isa 37:5–38:8, 39:3–8 (cf. 2 Chr 32:20) and Isaiah 1–33. It is unclear whether the biblical Book of Isaiah had any overlap with this vision of Isaiah in the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

118 “Kings of Israel ... unfaithfulness” MT; “Kings of Israel and Judah after they were exiled to Babylon in their acts of lawlessness” LXX. The two readings reflect different interpretations of the same consonantal text. That of the MT makes more sense in that only Judah was exiled to Babylon, although the Chronicler does at times apply the name Israel to Judah as well. If we read with the LXX, this verse would go under the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah.

119 1 Chr 9:1 appears to be intended as a conclusion to 1 Chronicles 1–8. Those chapters derive much of their material from the Pentateuch and other biblical passages, but some of the material is not found elsewhere in the Bible and presumably comes from this source.

120 An account of the reign of Jehoshaphat is found in 2 Chr 17:1–21:1 (cf. 1 Kgs 22:45 above). For the prophet Jehu son of Hanani see 1 Kgs 16:1–4, 7, 12; 2 Chr 19:2.

121 “count them up” MT; “count the people” LXX.

122 “Book” LXX; “number” MT (the two words are similar in Hebrew).

123 The episode of the abortive census is told in more detail in 1 Chr 21:1–22:1 (cf. 2 Sam 24:1–25).

124 “concerning it” emendation (cf. LXX?); “concerning me” MT.

125 The writing apparently explained the “plan” (i.e., blueprint) for the Temple, which David gave to Solomon according to 1 Chr 28:11–18.

The Acts of Samuel the Seer, The Acts of Nathan the Prophet, and The Acts of Gad the Visionary

²⁹And the acts¹²⁶ of David the king, first and last, behold they are written in the Acts of Samuel the Seer and in the Acts of Nathan the Prophet and in the Acts of Gad the Visionary, ³⁰with all his reign and his might and the times that came upon him and upon Israel and upon all the kingdoms of the earth. (1 Chr 29:29–30)¹²⁷

The Acts of Nathan the Prophet, The Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and The Visions of Jeddo the Visionary Concerning Jeroboam Son of Nebat

And the remainder of the acts of Solomon, first and last, are they not written in the Acts of Nathan the Prophet and in the Prophecy¹²⁸ of Ahijah the Shilonite and in the Visions of Jeddo¹²⁹ the Visionary Concerning Jeroboam Son of Nebat? (2 Chr 9:29)¹³⁰

The Acts of Shemiah the Prophet and Iddo the Visionary for Enrollment by Genealogy

And the acts of Rehoboam, first and last, are they not written in the Acts of Shemiah the Prophet and Iddo the Visionary for Enrollment by Genealogy?¹³¹ (2 Chr 12:15a)¹³²

¹²⁶ “the acts” MT; “the rest of the acts” LXX.

¹²⁷ An account of the reign of David is found in 1 Chr 10:14–29:30 (cf. the much longer account of his life and reign in 1 Sam 16:1–1 Kgs 2:11). For Samuel the seer/prophet see 1 Sam 1:1–12:25; 15:1–16:13; 19:18–24; 28:3–20. For Gad the seer/prophet see 1 Sam 22:5; 2 Sam 24:11–14//1 Chr 21:9–13; 2 Chr 29:25. For Nathan the prophet see 2 Sam 7:2–17//1 Chr 17:1–15; 2 Sam 12:1–15, 25; 1 Kgs 1:8–45; 2 Chr 29:25.

¹²⁸ “Prophecy” MT; “Words” (or “Acts”) LXX.

¹²⁹ “Jeddo” (= Iddo? Cf. 2 Chr 12:15a and 13:22 below) MT; “Joel” LXX.

¹³⁰ An account of the reign of Solomon is found in 1 Chr 28:1–2 Chr 9:31 (cf. the somewhat different account of his reign in 1 Kgs 1:1–11:43). For Nathan the prophet see above under 1 Chr 29:29–30. For Ahijah the Shilonite see 1 Kgs 11:29–39; 12:15//2 Chr 10:15; 2 Kgs 14:2–18. For Jeddo the visionary see perhaps on Iddo the visionary/prophet under 2 Chr 12:15a below. For Jeroboam son of Nebat see 2 Chr 10:2–11:15; 13:1–20 (cf. 1 Kgs 14:19 above).

¹³¹ “for Enrollment by Genealogy” MT; “and his ways” LXX (cf. 2 Chr 27:7; 28:26).

¹³² An account of the reign of Rehoboam is found in 2 Chr 9:31–12:16 (cf. 1 Kgs 14:29 above). For Shemiah the prophet see 1 Kgs 12:21–24//2 Chr 11:1–4; 2 Chr 12:5–8. For Iddo the visionary/prophet see 2 Chr 13:22 and perhaps 9:29.

The Midrash of the Prophet Iddo

And the rest of the acts of Abijah and his ways and his words are written in the Midrash¹³³ of the Prophet Iddo. (2 Chr 13:22)¹³⁴

The Midrash of the Book of Kings

And his (i.e., Joash's) sons and the multitude of oracles concerning him and the founding of the house of God,¹³⁵ behold they are written in the Midrash of the Book of the Kings. (2 Chr 24:27a)¹³⁶

The Acts of Uzziah

And the rest of the acts of Uzziah, first and last, Isaiah the son of Amoz the prophet¹³⁷ wrote. (2 Chr 26:22)¹³⁸

The Acts of the Kings of Israel and The Words of the Visionaries

¹⁸And the rest of the acts of Manasseh and his prayer to his God and the words of the visionaries who spoke to him in the name of Yahweh, the God of Israel, behold they are in the Acts of the Kings of Israel.¹³⁹ ¹⁹And his prayer and the granting of his entreaty and all his sin and his unfaithfulness and the places where he built high places and set up Asherim and idols before he humbled himself, behold they are written in the Words of the Visionaries.¹⁴⁰ (2 Chr 33:18–19)¹⁴¹

¹³³ "Midrash" MT; "Book" LXX. The term "midrash" occurs only here and in 2 Chr 24:27 (see below) in the Bible. In later Jewish tradition it means an exegetical comment or commentary on scripture, but it is unwise to read that meaning back into this much earlier context. The root of the word means "to seek, inquiry" "to study," or "to seek a divine oracle." Possible meanings include "story," "commentary" (on the Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah?); "(historical) inquiry" (cf. 2 Chr 32:31); or "prophetic oracle" (cf. 2 Kgs 3:11).

¹³⁴ An account of the reign of Abijah is found in 2 Chr 13:1–22 (cf. 1 Kgs 15:7 above). For Iddo the visionary/prophet see above on 2 Chr 12:15a.

¹³⁵ "And his sons ... house of God" MT; "and all his sons and the five went to him. And the rest," LXX.

¹³⁶ An account of the life and reign of Joash is found in 2 Chr 22:10–24:27 (cf. 2 Kgs 12:20 [Evv 12:19] above). For the term "midrash," see above on 2 Chr 13:22.

¹³⁷ "Isaiah son of Amoz the prophet" MT; "Iessias the prophet" LXX.

¹³⁸ An account of the reign of Uzziah (Azariah) is found in 2 Chr 26:1–23 (cf. 2 Kgs 15:6 above). For Isaiah the prophet, see 2 Chr 32:32 above. This work cannot be the biblical Book of Isaiah, which does not narrate the acts or words of King Uzziah.

¹³⁹ "of the Kings of Israel" MT; omit LXX.

¹⁴⁰ "Visionaries" MT one MS, LXX; Hozai MT. The name Hozai, which does not appear elsewhere in the Bible, is very similar to the Hebrew word "visionaries" and seems to be a copyist's error for it.

¹⁴¹ An account of the reign of Manasseh is found in 2 Chr 32:33–20 (cf. 2 Kgs 21:17 above).

Writings of David and Solomon on the Divisions of the Levites

And prepare by the houses of your fathers, according to their divisions, according to¹⁴² the writing of David the king of Israel and according to the written document of¹⁴³ Solomon¹⁴⁴ his son. (2 Chr 35:4)¹⁴⁵

The Laments

And Jeremiah lamented over Josiah and all the male and female singers have spoken in their laments about Josiah until today. And they made them a prescribed rite for Israel. And behold they are written in the Laments. (2 Chr 35:25)¹⁴⁶

142 "according to" MT MSS LXX; "in" MT MSS.

143 "and according to the written document of" MT MSS; "and in the written document of" MT MSS; "and by the hand of" LXX.

144 "Solomon" MT LXX MSS; "King Solomon" LXX MSS.

145 The divisions of the priests, Levites, and other Temple personnel are given in 1 Chr 24–26.

146 For Josiah see 2 Chr 35:26–27 above. For Jeremiah (the prophet) see the Book of Jeremiah. The Laments mentioned here are not to be confused with the biblical Book of Lamentations, which does not mention Josiah.

The Reception of Isa 40:15 in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, 2 *Baruch*, and 4 *Ezra**

Albertina Oegema

1 Introduction

One of the features that link *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, 2 *Baruch*, and 4 *Ezra* together is their reception of Isa 40:15. These three writings, dating from the second half of the first century or the beginning of the second century CE, share with LXX Isa 40:15 a comparison of people to a drop and spittle:

If all the nations are like a drop from a jar and are regarded like a turn of a balance, they will also be regarded like spittle (εἰ πάντα τὰ ἔθνη ὡς σταγῶν ἀπὸ κάδου καὶ ὡς ῥοπὴ ζυγοῦ ἐλογίσθησαν καὶ ὡς σίελος λογισθήσονται).

LXX Isa 40:15; trans. A.O.¹

... and I [i.e., God] will consider them [i.e., Israel] like a drop of water and liken them to spittle (*et tamquam stillicidium arbitrabor eos, et in sputo approximabo eos/eis*).

L.A.B. 7:3²

And the race of men will be to me [i.e., God] like a drop from a pitcher and will be reckoned like spittle (*et erit mihi hominum genus tamquam stillicidium urcei, et tamquam sputum estimabitur*).

L.A.B. 12:4

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1 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of the LXX are from the NETS (New English Translation of the Septuagint).

2 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* are from D.J. Harrington, trans. and introd., "Pseudo-Philo: (First Century a.d.)," in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha II, Expansions of the "Old Testament" and Legends, Wisdom and Philosophical Literature, Prayers, Psalms and Odes, Fragments of Lost Judeo-Hellenistic Works* (ed. J.H. Charlesworth; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 304–377.

⁴ And we [i.e., Israel] behold the multitude of their power while they act impiously; but they [i.e., the hostile nations] will be made like a drop (ܐܕܪܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܩܝܡܐ ܕܗܘܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ). ⁵ And we see the strength of their power while they resist the Mighty One every hour; but they will be reckoned like spittle (ܐܕܪܐ ܕܠܥܝܢܐ ܕܩܝܡܐ ܕܗܘܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ ܕܥܝܢܐ).

^{2 Bar.} 82:4–5³

As for the other nations which have descended from Adam, you [i.e., God] have said that they are nothing, and that they are like spittle, and you have compared their abundance to a drop from a bucket (*dixisti ... quoniam saliuae adsimilatae sunt et sicut stillicidium de uaso similasti habundantiam eorum*).

^{4 Ezra} 6:56⁴

The use of the imagery of a drop and spittle in a comparison with people probably originates from Isa 40:15. Although mention of a drop or of spittle occurs a couple of times in comparisons elsewhere (Sir 18:10; 26:22; Wis 11:22; *Apoc. Zeph.* 2:5; *L.A.B.* 19:15; *4 Ezra* 9:16), the combination of both the drop and the spittle in a comparison with people is, as far as I know, unique to Isa 40:15, *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra*. As Isa 40:15 is the oldest of these four writings, it is reasonable to assume that the imagery ultimately derives from this text.

It should be noted that *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra* are closer to the Septuagint (LXX) version of Isa 40:15 than to the Masoretic Text (MT) of this verse:

Behold, nations are like a drop from a bucket and they are regarded like dust of a balance. Behold, he [i.e., God] lifts up isles like something small (הן גוים כמר מדלי וכשחק מאזנים נחשבו הן איים כדק יטול).

MT Isa 40:15; trans. A.O.

3 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of *2 Baruch* are from A.F.J. Klijn, trans. and introd., “2 (Syriac Apocalypse of) Baruch: (Early Second Century a.d.),” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 1, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (ed. J.H. Charlesworth; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 621–652.

4 Unless otherwise indicated, all translations of *4 Ezra* are from B.M. Metzger, trans. and introd., “The Fourth Book of Ezra: (Late First Century a.d.) with the Four Additional Chapters,” in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 1, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (ed. J.H. Charlesworth; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 1983), 528–555.

Although both the MT and LXX version refer to a drop at the beginning of this verse, only the LXX refers to spittle at the end of this passage. The MT version instead reads בֶּדֶק (“like something small” [often translated as “like dust”]). This reading is supported by 1QIsa^a XXXIII, 15 (בֶּדֶק), by *Tg. Isa.* 40:15 (בְּדוֹקָא [“like chaff”]), and by *Vg. Isa* 40:15 (*pulvis* [“dust”]). The LXX reading of “like spittle” (ὡς σάλος), being supported by the VL reading *saliva/sputum* (“like spittle”), can be explained as a confusion of the consonants *dalet* and *resh* in Hebrew, of בֶּדֶק with בֶּרֶק (“like spittle”),⁵ perhaps via the word בֶּרֶק (“like something thin”).⁶

The LXX reading could have ended up in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra* in various ways. Presuming a Semitic, probably Hebrew, original for these writings,⁷ the LXX reading could reflect a variant Hebrew reading of Isa 40:15 or may have been included (either intentionally or by misreading the Hebrew original) in the Greek phase of the transmission history of these writings. The same explanation does not have to be true of all three writings. In addition, it is unclear whether these writings knew Isa 40:15 in a version comparable to our current LXX reading or whether they were acquainted with a version comparable to our current MT reading with only the change of בֶּדֶק into בֶּרֶק.⁸ Because of the inclusion of the LXX reading in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra*, I will use the LXX version of Isa 40:15 and its pericope in this paper.

In this contribution, the transformations of Isa 40:15 in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra* will be studied. In particular, I will focus on the transformations concerning content, which I believe to be limited to three aspects: (1) the literary character who utters the comparison; (2) the meaning of the drop and spittle; (3) the identification of the nations, especially to

5 See K. Elliger, *Deuterocesaja I, Jesaja 40,1–45,7* (BKAT 11.1; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag 1978), 42.

6 There may be a possibility that דֶּק and רֶק are also confused in Gen 41:3, 4, 19, 20, 27 (cf. Hans F. Fuhs, דָּקָא *dāḳā*, *ThWAT* 2:213, suggesting that דֶּקוֹת should be read instead of רֶקוֹת in Gen 41:19, 20, 27).

7 This seems to be generally accepted. See, however, James R. Davila, “(How) Can We Tell If a Greek Apocryphon or Pseudepigraphon Has Been Translated from Hebrew or Aramaic?,” *JSP* 15 (2005): 3–61, here 59. He confesses himself skeptical of the confident and widely accepted claims to have established the original languages (Hebr./Aram.) of works that survive only in secondary and/or tertiary translations. These claims depend on their being translated literally into Greek and then translated slavishly enough into the secondary language so that the Hebraisms and Aramaisms still show through, which is improbable.

8 Interestingly, the passages from *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra* do not mention the isles and their being lifted up (or weighed).

whom they are opposed. I will start with a discussion of LXX Isa 40:15 in its immediate context and will continue with a discussion of the relevant passages in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra*. In the final section of my contribution, I will briefly reflect on the question of how the diverse reception of Isa 40:15 in these writings may contribute to our understanding of their interrelationship, which has been debated for more than a century since *2 Baruch* and *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* were first introduced to the Western world in 1866 and 1898 respectively.⁹

2 The Meaning of LXX Isa 40:15 in Its Immediate Context

Isaiah 40:15 is part of those chapters of Isaiah which are commonly called “Deutero-Isaiah” (Isa 40–55). These chapters are generally believed to be an independent collection of prophecies from an unknown prophet who probably lived in Babylon towards the end of the Babylonian exile. More specifically, Isa 40:15 is part of a disputation between the prophet and the people in Isa 40:12–31 in which the prophet attempts to convince his people that God can and will remember and redeem his exiled people in Babylon. It belongs to a subunit in this disputation (vv. 12–17) that introduces God in a series of questions (part A) and that continues with some conclusions concerning the nations (part B):

- A ¹² Who has measured the water with his hand and heaven with a span and all the earth by handful? Who has weighed the mountains with a scale and the forests with a balance? ¹³ Who has known the mind of the Lord, and who has been his counselor to instruct him? ¹⁴ Or with whom did he consult, and he instructed him? Or who showed him judgment? Or who showed him the way of understanding?
- B ¹⁵ If all the nations have been accounted as a drop from a jar and as the sinking of a balance, they will also be accounted as spittle. ¹⁶ Lebanon is not enough for burning, nor are all the quadrupeds enough for a whole burnt offering. ¹⁷ And all the nations are as nothing, and they have been accounted as nothing.

LXX Isa 40:12–17 NETS

9 Antonio Maria Ceriani, “Apocalypsis Baruch, olim de graeco in syriacum, et nunc de syriaco in latinum translata,” in *Monumenta sacra et profana ex codicibus praesertim Bibliothecae Ambrosianae* 1.2 (Milan: Bibliotheca Ambrosiane Mediolani, 1866), 73–95; Leopold Cohn, “An Apocryphal Work Ascribed to Philo of Alexandria,” *JQR* 10 (1898): 277–332.

The one who utters the comparison in Isa 40:15 is the unknown prophet of Deutero-Isaiah. Although he is not explicitly introduced in Isa 40:12–31, he is probably the speaker as he refers to God in the third person singular and addresses Israel in the second person singular and plural throughout the disputation. However, in our verse he is referring to someone else's perspective on the nations. This is suggested by the use of the verbs ἐλογίσθησαν (“they have been regarded”) and λογισθήσονται (“they will be regarded”) in v. 15. It means that someone, from a certain perspective, regards these nations as a drop from a jar, as the sinking of a balance, and as spittle. Nevertheless, it is not clear whose perspective is alluded to, as v. 15 and its unit (vv. 15–17) do not state *who* regards these nations this way.¹⁰

The drop from a bucket and the spittle refer to the insignificant power of the nations as opposed to the Lord's power and sovereignty. Throughout the disputation between the prophet and the people, God's incomparability is discussed. In vv. 18 and 25 it is explicitly asked with whom God can be compared, but also in vv. 12–14 the rhetorical questions about who created the world and informed the Lord imply that no one can be compared with God.¹¹ In answer to these questions, vv. 15–17 oppose the nations' insignificance to God's power and sovereignty.¹² Unlike God, these nations do not have any power over the world or in history.

The specific identification of these nations, however, poses some difficulty. As for the MT, it is sometimes argued that these nations (גוים) are only the foreign, Gentile nations, whereas elsewhere it is believed that Israel is also

10 In the mt, it is God's perspective that is alluded to. This may be gathered from v. 17 (trans. A.O.): “All the nations are like nothing *before him*; as less than nothing and emptiness they are regarded *by him*” (כל־הגוים כאין נגדו מאפס ומהו נחשבו־לו).

11 There is some discussion concerning the answer to these questions in the mt version, but the issue is also applicable to the lxx. In v. 12, the answer should either be “God” or “no-one” and in vv. 13 and 14 “no-one.” See, e.g., J.L. Koole, trans. and comm., *Jesaja 11 1, Jesaja 40 tot en met 48* (COut; Kampen: Uitgeversmaatschappij J.H. Kok, 1985), 52–53, 55 (“God” in v. 12 and “no-one” in vv. 13 and 14); Klaus Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah: A Commentary on Isaiah 40–55* (trans. Margaret Kohl; ed. Peter Machinist; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 67 (“Yahweh alone” in v. 12 and—somewhat differently—“Cyrus” or “the Servant of the Lord” in vv. 13 and 14); Ulrich Berges, trans. and comm., *Jesaja 40–48* (Herders theologischer Kommentar zum Alten Testament; Freiburg: Herder, 2008), 131 (“no-one” in vv. 12, 13 and 14).

12 In the mt, this opposition is explicitly expressed in v. 17, in which both the nations and God are mentioned and in which God regards these nations as less than nothing and emptiness.

included.¹³ The LXX introduces πάντα τὰ ἔθνη (“all the nations”) as the subject of both v. 15 and v. 17. The addition of πάντα (“all”) in πάντα τὰ ἔθνη would suggest that all nations are meant, including Israel, but this does not have to be the case. Elsewhere in LXX Deutero-Isaiah, the same phrase is found in two other passages (43:9; 52:10), both times reflecting מְלִי־הַגּוֹיִם. In both texts, this phrase probably does not refer to *all* nations, but to the Gentile nations only.¹⁴ The same may be the case in Isa 40:15, because in the context of the disputation of Isa 40:12–31 the prophet has to convince the people that it is not empires like Babylon that wield power but, in fact, God.¹⁵

3 The Reception of Isa 40:15 in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, 2 *Baruch*, and 4 *Ezra*

3.1 The Reception of Isa 40:15 in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*

Liber antiquitatum biblicarum is a retelling of Genesis until 1 Samuel and accordingly is an example of that category of texts which is commonly called Rewritten Bible. Isaiah 40:15 is used twice by *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*. The first time, in *L.A.B.* 7:3, it is attested in the retelling of the Tower of Babel episode (*L.A.B.* 6–7). This passage reads “and I will consider them like a drop of water and liken them to spittle (*et tamquam stillicidium arbitror eos, et in sputo approximabo eos/eis*).”¹⁶ The second time, in *L.A.B.* 12:4, it is used in the retelling

13 The commentaries do not always explicitly attempt to identify the nations and the isles. See for the identification of the nations and isles as only the foreign, Gentile nations, e.g., Berges, *Jesaja 40–48*, 139. See for the inclusion of Israel among the nations and isles, e.g., Elliger, *Deuterojesaja I, Jesaja 40,1–45,7*, 55. One should observe that in the mt, the islands (or coastlands) in v. 15 and the Lebanon in v. 16 cannot include Israel, but v. 17 does refer to “all the nations” (כָּל־הַגּוֹיִם).

14 Isa 43:9 is part of a trial speech between the Lord and all the nations; in Isa 52:10 it is said that God will reveal his holy arm/salvation of Israel before all the nations/all the ends of the world.

15 Cf. Koole, *Jesaja II 1, Jesaja 40 tot en met 48*, 57; Baltzer, *Deutero-Isaiah*, 71 (both about the mt). Cf. also Isa 40:23–24, in which God is described as appointing rulers to rule for naught, as having made the earth as nothing, and as destroying these rulers.

16 The reading of *sputo* (“spittle”) is based upon a conjecture for the word *scuto* (“shield”) which is attested in all extant mss. For an extensive justification of this conjecture and the meaning of *approximare* as “to liken” in this context, see Howard Jacobson, *A Commentary on Pseudo-Philo's Liber antiquitatum biblicarum with Latin Text and English Translation* (2 vols.; AGJU 31; Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1996), 377–379. To this justification may be added that *sputo* (“spittle”) also better fits the references to the drop of water, flood, and thirst in *L.A.B.* 7:3 than *scuto* (“shield”).

of the golden calf episode (*L.A.B.* 12). There it reads “And the race of men will be to me like a drop from a pitcher and will be reckoned like spittle (*et erit mihi hominum genus tamquam stillicidium urcei, et tamquam sputum estimabitur*).”¹⁷

3.1.1 *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* 7:3

In *L.A.B.* 7:3, God utters the comparison with a drop and with spittle. This differs from the speaker in Isa 40:15 (the anonymous prophet of Deutero-Isaiah) and this change is reflected in the different wording of *L.A.B.* 7:3 when compared with Isaiah. In this passage, the verbs are changed into a first person singular form. In the first part of this verse, the verb *arbitrabor* (“I will consider”) is used instead of Isaiah’s ἐλογίσθησαν (“they are regarded”), whereas the verb *approximabo* (“I will liken”) is used instead of Isaiah’s λογισθήσονται (“they will be regarded”) in the second part. God is the implied subject of both verbs, contrary to “all the nations” (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) in LXX Isa 40:15a.

As for the identification of the nations, *L.A.B.* 7:3–4 contrasts Israel and the rest of humankind. In the Isaianic allusion of *L.A.B.* 7:3, the corresponding element to “all the nations” (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) is “them” (*eos*). This pronoun refers back to the people who built the tower. This would mean that almost all humanity is included, as only twelve people refused to build the tower (*L.A.B.* 6:3). In the next verse however, Abraham is elected by God “before all these men” (*ante omnes hos*), which again refers to the builders of the tower. Israel’s ancestor belonged to the group of people who refused to build the tower (*L.A.B.* 6:3), but Abraham also refused—unlike the eleven other men—to escape to the mountains when they are threatened with being thrown into the fire as punishment for their refusal (*L.A.B.* 6:11). This opposition between Israel, represented by Abraham, and the rest of humanity deviates from the meaning of Isa 40:15 in which the Lord and the nations were opposed to one another.¹⁸

17 Strikingly, the use of Isa 40:15 is not the only connection between the Tower of Babel and golden calf episodes in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*. In the retelling of the golden calf episode, the author explicitly refers to the building of the Tower of Babel: “And while he [i.e., Aaron] was speaking, they [i.e., the people] did not heed him, so that the word spoken in the time when the people sinned by building the tower might be fulfilled, when God said, ‘And now unless I stop them, everything that they will propose to do they will dare, and even worse.’” (*L.A.B.* 12:3). God’s words are a quotation of his words in Gen 11:6, but a similar citation of Gen 11:6 in *L.A.B.* 7:2 is actually used as an intertext for *L.A.B.* 12:3. For more information about the use of Gen 11:6 as a connection between both episodes, see B.N. Fisk, “Scripture Shaping Scripture: The Interpretive Role of Biblical Citations in Pseudo-Philo’s Episode of the Golden Calf,” *JSP* 17 (1998): 3–23, here 15–21.

18 This deviation was already noted by Bruce Norman Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?: Scripture,*

In *L.A.B.* 7:3, the insignificance expressed by the comparison of the builders of the tower with a drop and with spittle indicates the low regard God has for the builders of the tower. This is a future state closely connected to God's intended punishment for these people, as is indicated by the use of the future tenses in this verse. Isaiah 40:15 is used just after the passage in which God announces his punishment of the builders of the tower:

And behold now I will divide up their languages and scatter them in all regions so that a man will not understand his own brother and no one will hear the language of his neighbor. And I will banish them to the cliffs, and they will build for themselves huts with stalks of straw and will dig caves for themselves and live there like the beasts of the field. And thus they will remain before me all the time so that they will never make such plots again, and I will consider them like a drop of water and liken them to spittle. And to some the end will come by water, but others will be dried up with thirst.

L.A.B. 7:3

As a result of God's punishment, the builders of the tower will be literally in a very low state when they cannot understand each other and when they live on cliffs, in huts, and like the beasts of the field. Their deaths by water or thirst seem to flow naturally from this state. This makes clear that *L.A.B.* 7:3 does not so much express Isaiah's contrast between the insignificant power of the nations and God's power and sovereignty, but rather focuses on God's contempt for the builders of the tower after their punishment. They are insignificant, because they are worth nothing to him.

3.1.2 *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* 12:4

Like *L.A.B.* 7:3, God utters the comparison with a drop and with spittle in *L.A.B.* 12:4 instead of the anonymous prophet of Deutero-Isaiah. The different wording of *L.A.B.* 12:4 in comparison to LXX Isa 40:15 reflects this change. In *L.A.B.* 12:4, the corresponding element to the phrase "all the nations" (πάντα τὰ ἔθνη) in LXX Isa 40:15—the variation "the race of men" (*hominum genus*)—is still the subject of the verbs. However, the addition of the personal pronoun *mihi* ("to me," i.e., God) in the first part of this verse makes clear that God is uttering the comparison with the drop and spittle.

Story and Exegesis in the Rewritten Bible of Pseudo-Philo (JSPSup 37; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 172 and Jacobson, *A Commentary*, 1:379.

In *L.A.B.* 12:4, “the race of men” (*hominum genus*) is used instead of “all the nations” in Isa 40:15. The interpretation of *hominum genus*, however, poses some difficulty, for God awkwardly moves from an indictment of Israel to an indictment of all humanity in his prediction of his punishment of Israel:

And now I too will forsake them [i.e., Israel], and I will turn again and make peace with them so that a house may be built for me among them, a house that will be destroyed because they will sin against me. And the race of men will be to me like a drop from a pitcher and will be reckoned like spittle.

L.A.B. 12:4

This reference to *hominum genus* could be interpreted as a very limited reference to the Jewish people,¹⁹ but this is unlikely. It is more plausible that the author of *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* sees a special connection between Israel, humanity, and God, in which Israel’s relationship with God affects all humanity, for better or for worse, depending on Israel’s faithfulness to God.²⁰ The same connection is also expressed in *L.A.B.* 44 in which God announces his punishment of another instance of Israel’s apostasy:²¹

⁶ ... the LORD said, “Behold I will root up the earth (*terram*) and destroy the whole human race (*totum genus hominum*), because, when I established laws on Mount Sinai, I showed myself to the sons of Israel in the storm ...^{22 8} “Therefore, behold I abhor the race of men (*genus hominum*), and I will cut away the root of my creation; and those dying will outnumber those being born, because the house of Jacob has been infected in its wickedness and the impiety of Israel has been multiplied.

L.A.B. 44:6–8

19 See Jacobson, *A Commentary*, 1:489. Jacobson is “unable to explain this [i.e., the reference to *hominum genus*],” but refers to Origen, *Hom. Num.* 7.4.3 in which Origen attempts to show that in Isa 40:15 Israel is included in God’s rejection of all nations.

20 For this interpretation, see Karla R. Suomala, *Moses and God in Dialogue: Exodus 32–34 in Postbiblical Literature* (Studies in Biblical Literature 61; New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 83, 87. See also Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 170–171, extensively discussing the problematic interpretation of *hominum genus*.

21 Fisk also refers to the parallels with *L.A.B.* 44 (Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 170).

22 A description of Israel’s agreement to keep God’s commandments and how they broke these commandments follows.

This means that in *L.A.B.* 12:4 the nations in Isa 40:15 have been interpreted as referring to all nations, including Israel. Any opposition, whether between God and the nations, Israel and the nations, or other, is not made explicit.

As for the meaning of the drop and spittle, they express the low regard God has for the human race after the destruction of the temple due to Israel's sinning. As in *L.A.B.* 7:3, it is a future state closely connected to God's intended punishment for his people. This is indicated by the use of the future tenses in this verse. Isaiah 40:15 is used just after God's prediction of the destruction of the temple due to Israel's sinning in *L.A.B.* 12:4 (cited above). Without the temple and Israel keeping the commandments as a connection between God and humanity, God no longer cares about humankind. As in *L.A.B.* 7:3, this demonstrates that *L.A.B.* 12:4 focuses on God's contempt for the human race after Israel's punishment, instead of expressing Isaiah's contrast between the insignificant power of the nations and God's power and sovereignty. The human race is insignificant, because they are worth nothing to him.

3.2 *The Reception of Isa 40:15 in 2 Bar. 82:4–5*

2 Baruch is an apocalypse, the story of which is set in Palestine in the period just before and just after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the first temple in 587/6 BCE. Our passage belongs to a full quoted letter, which the main character Baruch allegedly sent to the nine and a half tribes across the Euphrates (chs. 78–87).²³ The comparison with a drop and spittle is divided among two verses in ch. 82:

23 It should be pointed out that this letter is transmitted apart from the apocalyptic part of *2 Baruch* in some forty Syriac Old Testaments. However, our only two mss that have preserved the apocalyptic part, the Syriac translation from Codex Ambrosianus (7a1 or c) and an Arabic version from the Arabic Manuscript of Mount Sinai (ms 589), have also included the letter. This state of affairs resulted in discussions concerning the question of whether the epistle originally belonged to *2 Baruch* or not. For an extensive argumentation in favor of an original inclusion, see Pierre Bogaert, introd., trans., and comm., *Apocalypse de Baruch* (2 vols.; SC 144–145; Paris: Les Éditions du Cerf, 1969), 2:68–72, 77–78; Matthias Henze, *Jewish Apocalypticism in Late First Century Israel: Reading Second Baruch in Context* (TSAJ 142; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 367–369. For an extensive argumentation contra an original inclusion, see Gwendolyn B. Saylor, *Have the Promises Failed?: A Literary Analysis of 2 Baruch* (SBLDS 72; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1984), 98–101. However, neither argumentation convincingly demonstrates that the letter either had or did not have a different provenance than the apocalypse. In my contribution, this question is not relevant for understanding our passage.

⁴ And we behold the multitude of their power while they act impiously; *but they will be made like a drop* (ܐܠܗܝܬܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ²⁴ܕܠܗܝܬܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ). ⁵ And we see the strength of their power while they resist the Mighty One every hour; *but they will be reckoned like spittle* (ܐܠܗܝܬܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܠܗܝܬܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ).

² Bar. 82:4–5; emphasis A.O.

Both verses are part of a unit in the letter in which Baruch attempts to console the nine and a half tribes by announcing the punishment of the nations for their wicked behavior.

The one who makes the comparison with a drop and spittle is Baruch, as he allegedly writes this letter (cf. 2 Bar. 82:1 [“My brothers, therefore I have written to you”]). Although Baruch is the speaker instead of the unknown prophet in Isaiah, the situation is similar to that in Isaiah as Baruch also focuses on someone else’s perspective. This is suggested by Baruch’s use of “to reckon” (ܡܕܢܐ) in v. 5. However, as it does not state *by whom* the nations will be reckoned like spittle, it is difficult to determine whose perspective is alluded to. The subject in the main clauses of vv. 4 and 5, a first person plural, may be included however, because this group of people is presented as seeing the multitude and strength of the nations’ power in these verses.

2 Baruch uses Isaiah in a distinction between a first person plural and a third person plural. These groups of people can be identified as the hostile nations and Israel with the help of the first three verses of ch. 82:

¹ My brothers, therefore I have written to you that you may find consolation with regard to the multitude of tribulations. ² But you ought to know that our Creator will surely avenge us on all our enemies²⁵ according to everything which they have done against us and among us; in particular that the end which the Most High prepared is near, and that his grace is coming, and that the fulfillment of his judgment is not far. ³ For now

24 Interestingly, the Syriac translation in the Codex Ambrosianus (7a1 or c) does not read ܐܠܗܝܬܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ (“like a drop”) like the Arabic version of the complete 2 Baruch and the other Syriac mss with only the epistle, but it reads ܐܠܗܝܬܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ ܕܗܝܠܐ (“like pollution”). However, in the letter the many singular readings of this Syriac translation have to be rejected as being errors of the Syriac copyist (cf. F. Leemhuis, A.F.J. Klijn, and G. j. h. van Gelder, *The Arabic Text of the Apocalypse of Baruch: Edited and Translated with a Parallel Translation of the Syriac Text* [Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986], 12). In my opinion, this is also the case in our verse.

25 The word “enemies” [ܥܠܝܢܐ] is a correction of Klijn’s “brothers”.

we see the multitude of the happiness of the nations although they have acted wickedly; but they are like a vapor.

2 Bar. 82:1–3

Interpreting the first person plural in 2 Bar. 82:4–5 narrowly, it refers back to Baruch and his “brothers,” the exiled nine and a half tribes across the Euphrates in v. 1. However, all Israel may be implied as well, as Baruch, earlier in his letter, writes: “Are we not all, the twelve tribes, bound by one captivity as we also descend from one father?” (2 Bar. 78:4). In this verse, the first person plural clearly encompasses all Israel. The third person plural is paralleled by “the nations” (עַמִּים) in v. 3 and is identified as Israel’s enemies (אֹיְבֵי) in v. 2. They are clearly hostile nations, as Baruch refers to the multitude of tribulations in v. 1 and characterizes these enemies as doing things against and with Israel in v. 2. They may be identified as the Assyrians and the Babylonians, although the actual context of 2 Baruch may suggest the Romans. This means that 2 Baruch diverted from Isaiah’s opposition between God and the nations by contrasting Israel with the nations.

2 Baruch uses the references to a drop and spittle to symbolize the downfall of the nations during God’s final judgment. This differs from Isaiah, in which the insignificant power of the nations is emphasized. In 2 Baruch, the reason for the punishment of the nations is, on the one hand, the mistreatment of Israel, as v. 2 says that God will avenge Israel on all their enemies according to all they have done against and among Israel. On the other hand, some of the actions of the nations described in vv. 3–9 suggest something different:

³ For now we see the multitude of the happiness of the nations *although they have acted wickedly*; but they are like a vapor. ⁴ And we behold the multitude of their power *while they act impiously*; but they will be made like a drop. ⁵ And we see the strength of their power *while they resist the Mighty One every hour*; but they will be reckoned like spittle. ⁶ And we will ponder about the glory of their majesty *while they do not keep the statutes of the Most High*; but as smoke they will pass away. ⁷ And we think about the beauty of their gracefulness *while they go down in impurities*; but like grass which is withering, they will fade away. ⁸ And we ponder about the strength of their cruelty *while they themselves do not think about the end*; but they will be broken like a passing wave. ⁹ And we notice the pride of their power *while they deny the goodness of God by whom it was given to them*; but as a passing cloud they will vanish.

2 Bar. 82:3–9; emphasis A.O.

While “acting wickedly” (עָשָׂה רָע [“to act wickedly/to do wickedness”]) in v. 3 and “acting impiously” (עָשָׂה חָמָא [“to do/treat ill”]) in v. 4 may still be too general in meaning, resisting God, not keeping God’s statutes, going down in impurities, not thinking about the end, and denying God’s goodness suggest that the nations will be punished for not observing some kind of law and for not acknowledging the Lord. Accordingly, the predictions that they will be made like vapor, drop, spittle, smoke, withering grass, a passing wave, and a passing cloud in these verses express that these nations will eventually be punished for their misbehavior with their demise. Despite their current strength, glory, and power, they will eventually turn to insignificance or even disappear.

3.3 The Reception of Isa 40:15 in 4 Ezra 6:56

Like 2 Baruch, 4 Ezra is an apocalypse set in Babylon thirty years after the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the first temple in 587/6 BCE. Our passage belongs to the third introductory address (4 Ezra 6:38–59)²⁶ in which the main character, Ezra, first retells the six days of creation (vv. 38–54) and then accuses God that Israel does not rule the world although the world was created for them (vv. 55–59). The passage itself, 4 Ezra 6:56, reads in the Latin version “you have said ... that they are like spittle, and you have compared their abundance to a drop from a bucket (*dixisti ... quoniam salivae adsimilatae sunt et sicut stillicidium de uaso similasti habundantiam eorum*).”²⁷

26 4 Ezra can be divided into seven units: I—4 Ezra 3:1–5:20; II—4 Ezra 5:21–6:34; III—4 Ezra 6:35–9:25; IV—4 Ezra 9:26–10:59; V—4 Ezra 11:1–12:51; VI—4 Ezra 13:1–58; VII—4 Ezra 14:1–48. The first four units start with an introductory address by Ezra, units IV and V start with a vision, and unit VII starts with a speech of God, addressed to Ezra.

27 This reading is confirmed by the other important witness to 4 Ezra, the Syriac translation, which only has ܬܡܝܬܐ (“you have compared them”) instead of *adsimilatae sunt* (“they are like”). The Ethiopic, Armenian, and Arabic mss are similar to the Syriac and Latin translations or are based upon a misreading of the (hypothetical) Greek *Vorlage*. For a convenient overview of the various ancient translations, see Bruno Violet, *Die Esra-Apokalypse* (iv. Esra) I, *Die Überlieferung* (GCS 18; Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs’sche Buchhandlung, 1910), 124. Only one Arabic ms, the one published by Ewald (H.G.A. Ewald, *Das vierte Ezrabuch: Nach seinem Zeitalter, seinen arabischen Übersetzungen und einer neuen Wiederherstellung* [Abhandlungen der Königlichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Göttingen 11; Göttingen: Dieterichs, 1863]), reads “dust” instead of “spittle” and would thus have preserved mt Isa 40:15. However, the Ewald Arabic ms is regarded as a reworked version of the Greek (cf. Michael Edward Stone, *Fourth Ezra: A Commentary on the Book of Fourth Ezra* [ed. Frank Moore Cross; Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1990], 6) and may accordingly have adjusted the text to mt Isa 40:15. In this paper, I will use the Latin version.

The comparison with a drop and spittle is used in a quotation of God's words by Ezra. This means that, although Ezra is the speaker instead of the unknown prophet in Isa 40:15, the situation is similar as both passages focus on someone else's perspective. In *4 Ezra* 6:56, two changes to the Isaianic text stress that God is being quoted. The addition of the phrase *dixisti ... quoniam* ("you have said ... that") indicates that the comparison with spittle and with a drop from a bucket is part of God's words quoted in indirect speech. The word *similasti* ("you have compared") underlines that the comparison is God's, which means that Ezra focuses on God's perspective.

Presenting the comparison with a drop and spittle as a quotation of God's words fits the context of the third introductory address very well. Before his accusation of God, Ezra retells the six days of creation (6:38–54; cf. Gen 1). In this retelling, he stresses that it was carried out by divine speech, as God is described as saying or commanding the works of creation on each day. In addition, Ezra makes clear that every work of creation had a purpose, culminating in the statement that God placed Adam as a ruler over all the works he had made (v. 54).²⁸ In his accusation of God after this retelling, Ezra further emphasizes God's word and stresses that the world's purpose was its possession by Israel (vv. 55, 59):

⁵⁵ All this I have spoken before you, O Lord, because *you have said* that it was for us that you created this world. ⁵⁶ As for the other nations which have descended from Adam, *you have said* that they are nothing, and that they are like spittle, and you have compared their abundance to a drop from a bucket. ⁵⁷ And now, O Lord, behold, these nations, which are reputed as nothing, domineer over us and devour us. ⁵⁸ But we your people, whom *you have called* your first-born, only begotten, zealous for you, and most dear, have been given into their hands. ⁵⁹ If the world has indeed been created for us, why do we not possess our world as an inheritance? How long will this be so?

4 Ezra 6:55–59; emphasis A.O.

Contrary to the creation account, Israel's exilic situation does *not* conform to God's word and purpose. As a result, God's powerful word in the events of creation contrasts with God's impotent word with respect to Israel. If God himself has said that the world is created for Israel, that the nations are like

28 For the "divine speech" and "purpose" themes in *4 Ezra* 6:38–54, see, e.g., Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 182–183.

nothing, and that Israel has a special relationship with him, God must either have good reasons for not keeping his promise or be impotent in his cosmic sovereignty.²⁹

4 *Ezra* uses the comparison with a drop and spittle in a distinction between the nations and Israel. This distinction bothers Ezra very much in the first three units of 4 *Ezra*. In these units the assumptions underlying Ezra's laments and questions are similar to those of E.P. Sanders' "covenantal nomism."³⁰ This results in the importance of the topic of the one versus the many, i.e., the situation of Israel versus the situation of the other nations. Ezra feels that Israel's exilic situation is unfair, because it does not conform to the superiority of Israel over the other nations which God's election of Israel and his gift of the law brought about (cf., e.g., 4 *Ezra* 3:28–36; 4:22–25; 5:28–29). This concern with the unfair representation of the one-many opposition is also expressed in 4 *Ezra* 6:55–59 (cited above). On the one hand, the relationship with God is part of this opposition, as Israel—not the nations—has a special relationship with God (v. 58). On the other hand, the dominion of the world is part of this opposition, as the nations—not Israel—rule the world (v. 57), even though God had promised Israel possession of it (v. 59). This means the author of 4 *Ezra* interpreted the reference to the nations in Isa 40:15 as if it referred to the Gentiles, although he did not use Isaiah's opposition between God and the nations.

In this context, the comparisons to a drop from a bucket and to spittle show that the nations are worth nothing to God. The addition of the phrases "they are nothing" in v. 56 and "which are reputed as nothing" in v. 57, which may be an allusion to Isa 40:17 (MT: "All the nations are as nothing before him; they are accounted by him as less than nothing and emptiness"; LXX: "And

29 For the contrast between Ezra's retelling of the six days of creation in vv. 38–54 and his accusation of God in vv. 55–59, see Bruce W. Longenecker, *2 Esdras* (Guides to Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1995), 38.

30 For this identification, see Karina Martin Hogan, *Theologies in Conflict in 4 Ezra: Wisdom Debate and Apocalyptic Solution* (Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 130; Leiden: Brill, 2008), 36. According to Sanders (E.P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* [London: SCM Press, 1977], 422), the "pattern" or "structure" of covenantal nomism can be summarized as follows: "(1) God has chosen Israel and (2) given the law. The law implies both (3) God's promise to maintain the election and (4) the requirement to obey. (5) God rewards obedience and punishes transgression. (6) The law provides for means of atonement, and atonement results in (7) maintenance or re-establishment of the covenantal relationship. (8) All those who are maintained in the covenant by obedience, atonement and God's mercy belong to the group which will be saved."

all the nations are as nothing, and they have been accounted as nothing”), underscores this worthlessness. Unlike Israel, these nations do not have a special relationship with God. Whereas Israel is called God’s first-born, only begotten, zealous for God, and most dear in v. 58 (Lat.), the Gentiles are nothing, compared to spittle and a drop from a bucket, and reputed as nothing in vv. 56–57. Although the nations are still descendants of Adam (vv. 54, 56), they have ceased to count in God’s eyes and therefore should not rule the world. In this way *4 Ezra* differs from Isa 40:15, which expressed the insignificant power of the nations as opposed to the Lord’s power and sovereignty.

3.4 Conclusion

The results of the preceding discussion may be summarized in the following overview:

	Isa 40:15	<i>L.A.B.</i> 7:3	<i>L.A.B.</i> 12:4	<i>2 Bar.</i> 82:4–5	<i>4 Ezra</i> 6:56
<i>the one uttering the comparison</i>	the unknown prophet, referring to someone else’s perspective	God	God	Baruch, referring to someone else’s perspective	Ezra quoting God
<i>the meaning of the drop from the bucket and spittle</i>	insignificant power in contrast to God’s power	low regard resulting from punishment	low regard resulting from punishment	demise resulting from punishment	worthlessness due to no special relationship with God
<i>the identification of the nations</i>	Gentiles	all humanity minus one (Abraham)	all humanity	(hostile) Gentiles	Gentiles
<i>and to whom they are opposed</i>	God	Israel	–	Israel	Israel

This overview shows that *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra* all gave new meanings to the comparison with a drop and spittle in their reception of Isa 40:15, but in different ways. *2 Baruch* differs from all the other

passages as it is the only passage in which God is not the one who utters (or is quoted as having uttered) the comparison. *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra* differ from the two passages in *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* in that they do not interpret the references to the drop and the spittle as symbols of low regard resulting from God's punishment, but as representing the coming demise of the hostile nations when God punishes them and the nations' worthlessness due to their lack of a special relationship with God respectively. *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* 12:4 differs from all the other passages by being the only passage in which the nations are understood as all of humanity, with no opposition made explicit. Despite these differences, however, it should be pointed out that all three writings share the formal characteristics of using the imagery of a drop and spittle in a comparison with people and signifying something disparaging with it.

4 The Relationship between *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra*

This diverse reception of Isa 40:15 raises the question of whether it may contribute to our understanding of the interrelationship between *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra*.

In the past, it has been suggested that one or two of these writings could be somehow dependent upon one or both of the other writings. The younger writing(s) could have used the older one(s) as a source³¹ or could have been written as a reaction to it.³² However, arguing in favor of any direct dependence is very difficult and depends on one's assessment of the specificity of the verbal, stylistic, structural, and narrative similarities, the theological parallels, and the common traditions in these three writings. Complicating factors, for example, are the difficulties in dating and locating these texts, their compositional and transmission histories, the differences in genre, possible developments of certain ideas over time, and the influence of the translators.

I believe that the diverse reception of Isa 40:15 cannot convincingly demonstrate any literary dependence of one writing upon the other. As explained above, none of these writings are completely similar in the way they interpreted

³¹ See more recently, e.g., Fisk, *Do You Not Remember?*, 37.

³² See, e.g., John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature* (2nd ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1998), 224 (only about *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra*).

this verse. In addition, none of them referred to the drop from a bucket and spittle in the same way. In both passages of *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum* the drop from a bucket and spittle are mentioned in the same order as in Isaiah, but they switched positions in *4 Ezra* and are divided over two verses in *2 Baruch*. Besides, the bucket is not mentioned in *L.A.B.* 7:3 and *2 Baruch*. Moreover, the contexts in which Isa 40:15 was used are not similar. In *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, it is attested in the Tower of Babel and the golden calf episodes, whereas *4 Ezra* used this passage in an accusation of God and *2 Baruch* in a prediction of the destruction of the hostile Gentiles during God's judgment. These arguments are probably not decisive evidence against a (literary) dependence of one writing upon the other, but it does make such a dependence appear less likely.

The diverse reception of Isa 40:15 better supports the view that these writings have a similar background.³³ They may have influenced each other at a certain point in history, but their exact relationship is of secondary importance. One is left with the impression that the use of Isaiah's imagery of a drop and spittle in a comparison with people was a common expression in the context from which *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, *2 Baruch*, and *4 Ezra* originated. On the one hand, the use of this comparison from Isaiah is only attested in these three writings, whereas on the other hand there are both differences and similarities in their interpretation of this verse. This means that Isaiah's imagery could probably be used in different situations, and therefore be differently interpreted, with the only restrictions that it should be used in a comparison with people and express something disparaging. However, this flexibility in the use of Isaiah's imagery of a drop and spittle in a comparison with people also makes it difficult to establish the *exact* interrelationship between these three writings and the *exact* background from which they originated. Such a case may be constructed on other, more solid bases. At the very most, the diverse reception of Isa 40:15 only indicates that these writings had a common background.

33 This is the view found in the most recent commentaries on these writings. See Stone, *Fourth Ezra*, 42; Jacobson, *A Commentary*, 1:201; Henze, *Jewish Apocalypticism*, 181–186 (only about *2 Baruch* and *4 Ezra*).

After the Order of Melchizedek: Royal Themes and Melchizedek Traditions Applied to Jesus by the Author of Hebrews

David J. Larsen

The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews presents Jesus as a high priest analogous (to an extent) to the Aaronid high priests who traditionally officiated at the temple, offering sacrifices and entering the Holy of Holies on the Day of Atonement. However, he explains that the Aaronid priests were only an “example and shadow of heavenly things” (Heb 8:5); their ordinances were “patterns of heavenly things” (Heb 9:23), but were “carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation” (Heb 9:10), and could not help believers obtain “perfection” (Heb 7:11). The author dedicates much space (most of chapters 5–10) to demonstrating how Jesus’ priesthood is superior to that of the Aaronid/Levitical priesthood. Whereas the contemporary Jews traced their priesthood back to Aaron, whom they saw as the first high priest, Hebrews presents Jesus as a priest after the order of the more ancient Melchizedek (Heb 7:21).

Jesus’ Melchizedek-type priesthood involved, for example, some of the following aspects: ascending to heaven to appear in the presence of God (Heb 9:24), performing priestly duties in heaven (Heb 7–9), having the power of an endless life (Heb 7:16), holding an unchangeable priesthood for ever (Heb 7:24), being Son of God (Heb 5:5), and being enthroned at His right hand (Heb 1:13). Although Jesus is compared positively to the ancient figure of Melchizedek, we get the sense that Jesus is not equal to, but superior to Melchizedek. In chapter 7, the text expounds on the figure of Melchizedek, who the author sees as an historical figure who was “made like unto the Son of God” (Heb 7:3). This can be interpreted to mean that Melchizedek both prefigures but also is modeled after Jesus Christ, the Son of God, “the true celestial high priest.”¹

From where does the author of Hebrews derive his notions of the priesthood of Jesus? Why does he compare Jesus to the mysterious figure of Melchizedek, whose name appears only twice in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 14:18–20; Ps 110:4)? The author must have been familiar with the significance of Jesus being a

1 James R. Davila, *Liturgical Works*, Eerdmans Commentaries on the Dead Sea Scrolls (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans, 2000), 165.

Melchizedek High Priest instead of Aaronid. The early Christians must have known of traditions that allowed them to connect Jesus to Melchizedek.

In the past few years, the topic of Jesus as high priest and the traditions that allowed the author of Hebrews to create the relationship between Jesus and Melchizedek that he does, have been given increased attention. This topic was, for example, treated extensively at a conference on Hebrews held at the University of St Andrews in 2006.

At the conference, convened by Richard Bauckham, Trevor Hart, and Nathan McDonald, one of the papers relevant to this topic was presented by Eric Mason of Judson University, who argued that the closest parallels to the view of Jesus' role and priesthood as depicted in Hebrews are to be found in the Dead Sea Scrolls' traditions regarding Melchizedek. A more complete exposition of Mason's views was published as a monograph on the topic by Brill in 2008.²

Although I am convinced that Mason is correct in many of his arguments, and that his overall emphasis on the shared views between Hebrews and the Qumran texts is certainly appropriate, he also spends a substantial portion of his monograph downplaying (although not necessarily dismissing) the connections that previous scholars have made between Hebrews and other texts and traditions, such as those of Jewish thinkers like Philo, the Gnostics, or pseudepigraphal texts like 2 Enoch. Although many of his assertions against these are surely justified, his efforts to narrow the focus regarding the origins of the traditions informing the author of Hebrews to a few texts from Qumran can (although not necessarily his intention) be seen to obscure some trends of Jewish and Christian thinking that can likewise be seen to parallel some of the ideas in this work. As Mason himself states, "Admittedly no textual dependence of Hebrews on a Qumran document can be produced. What can be considered, though, are hints of shared views in the Qumran texts and Hebrews."³ Although there are clearly many instances where ideas in these Qumran texts are comparable to the traditions espoused in Hebrews, there are other ancient texts where "hints of shared views" can be identified and should be explored. It is the purpose of this paper to expound on some of the many traditions that may have contributed to the author's bold view of Jesus and his priesthood and mysterious connections to Melchizedek that are employed by the author of Hebrews.

2 Eric Farrel Mason, *'You Are a Priest Forever': Second Temple Jewish Messianism and the Priestly Christology of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2008).

3 Ibid., 193.

Hebrews' Use of Scripture

The only real quotations from or allusions to specific texts that we can identify in the Epistle to the Hebrews are of passages from the texts of the Hebrew Bible. Hebrews quotes, alludes to, or interprets from the Psalms, Proverbs, 2 Samuel, Genesis, Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Haggai. There is a special interest in the Psalms, including some of those which are termed, in modern scholarship, the Royal and Enthronement Psalms.

Although Hebrews' use of Psalm 110:4 to describe Christ's priesthood has certainly not gone unnoticed, a detailed analysis of that text's reception history in Jewish and Christian circles is often lacking in the commentaries. There is something of a gap in our current understanding of how the early Jewish and Christian interpretations of the Psalms developed. The development of the understanding of the figure of Melchizedek is related to the reception history of Psalm 110. As noted previously, the only mentions of Melchizedek that we have in the texts of the Hebrew Bible are the story of Abraham paying tithes to Melchizedek, king of Salem, in Genesis 14 and the mysterious ordination of the royal figure in Psalm 110 to the priesthood "after the order of Melchizedek." Mason does a fine job of describing how these passages were interpreted by different parties in the Second Temple Period.⁴

Melchizedek as Mortal and Divine in Tradition

Mason notes that interpretations of Genesis 14 tend to see Melchizedek as a mortal man, albeit an exceptional one. According to James Davila, "Melchizedek is mentioned fairly frequently in Second Temple literature as a human royal figure (Josephus, *Ant.* 1.180–181; 1QapGen xxii:13–17; Pseudo-Eupolemos [*Praep. Evan.* 9.17.6]; *Apos. Con.* 7.39.3; 8.5.3; 8.12.23)."⁵ Following the biblical text, he was seen not only as a king, but also as a priest of God Most High (Gen 14:8; cf. Heb 7:1).

The author of Hebrews emphasizes his superiority to Abraham, in that he blessed Abraham and received tithes from him. By extension, Melchizedek is also superior to Levi, the patriarch of the Aaronid priesthood line. However, he goes further to declare that Melchizedek was: "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made

⁴ Ibid., 138–190.

⁵ Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 165.

like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually" (Heb 7:3). In contrast to the later Aaronid priests who traced their genealogy and priesthood back to Aaron, who were subject to death, and thereupon lost their priesthood, the author of Hebrews makes the human figure of Melchizedek similar to Jesus, with divine/immortal attributes and an eternal priesthood.

Genesis mentions nothing of Melchizedek's background (he is not listed in any genealogies), but later Jewish and Christian speculations include him in the line of the Biblical patriarchs, either as a descendent of Noah or of Noah's brother, Nir (2 Enoch 71:32–33). In the Nag Hammadi texts, he is placed in the line "of Adam, [Abel], Enoch, [Noah] you, Melchizedek, [the Priest] of God [Most High]."⁶ In the Targumic and Rabbinic materials, Melchizedek is often specifically named as Shem, the great high priest—the eldest son of Noah.⁷ Some of the Rabbis believed that Shem/Melchizedek had received his priesthood from his fathers, the Patriarchs, and had passed that priesthood on to Abraham, from whom the Levites would claim to have eventually received it.⁸

The placement of Melchizedek in the genealogies of the biblical patriarchs, among other purposes, may have served to counter the claims of those Jewish and Christian parties who interpreted the lack of any given genealogy as suggesting that he was an eternal, heavenly figure. Fred Horton, Jr., in *The Melchizedek Tradition*, argues that the references to a lack of parentage in Hebrews 7:3 have nothing to do with Melchizedek's mortal lineage, but has reference to the fact that he has no Levitical priestly genealogy.⁹

Josephus emphasizes the interpretation of his name as "Righteous King." He goes further to assert that "he was the first to officiate as priest of God."

6 Birger A. Pearson (ed.), *Nag Hammadi Codices IX and X*, p. 63.

7 See *Tg. Neof.* on Gen. 14:18 in M. McNamara (tr.), *Targum Neofiti I: Genesis* (The Aramaic Bible, 1A; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 92; *Tg. Ps.-J.* in M. Maher (tr.), *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis* (The Aramaic Bible, 1B; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1992), 58. See also *Gen. Rab.* 43:1, 44:7; *Abot R. Nat.* 2, *Pirqe R. El.* 7, 27; *b. Ned.* 32b; as cited in Andrei Orlov, "The Heir of Righteousness and the King of Righteousness: The Priestly Noachic Polemics in 2 Enoch and the Epistle to the Hebrews," in *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS, vol. 58, Pt. 1, April 2007, pp. 55–57.

8 See arguments in *ibid.* Orlov expounds on the idea that the connection between Shem and Melchizedek seemed to have been used by the Rabbis involved in first century sacerdotal debates as a polemic against the priestly Noachic tradition in order to assert a transition of the priestly line from the Patriarchs to Abraham through Melchizedek.

9 Fred L. Horton, *The Melchizedek Tradition: A Critical Examination of the Sources to the Fifth Century A.D. and in the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 30 (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 156–160.

Not only was he the first priest of God (before Levi or Aaron), but he also, according to Josephus, named the sacred city of Jerusalem and was the first to build a temple there.¹⁰ As with most interpretations of Genesis 14, Josephus describes Melchizedek as a great priest/king, with no mention of Psalm 110 or any attribution of angelic or heavenly status to him.

Philo generally shares similar views in his interpretations of Gen. 14, but in *On the Embassy to Gaius* (3.79–82), Philo equates Melchizedek with Reason, or the Logos, the divine mediator between God and humans.¹¹ Philo's view can be seen as bridging the gap, in much the way that Hebrews does, between the view of Melchizedek as a human king and the descriptions, like some of those found at Qumran, that see him as a heavenly being.

At Qumran, *11QMelchizedek* (11Q13) depicts Melchizedek as an eschatological warrior angel and other texts, such as the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, arguably present him as an angelic priest serving God in the heavenly sanctuary. Although this reading has been the focus of debate, both the relevant DJD volume¹² and Jim Davila¹³ have found a reference to Melchizedek in Song VIII¹⁴ that is reconstructed as mentioning “the chiefs of the princes of the wonderful priesthoods of Melchizedek.” Put another way, we could say that this passage indicates that the organization of the angelic priesthood ranks in heaven is “after the order of Melchizedek” and that Melchizedek is the leader of the angelic priesthood. The *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice*, also known as the “Angelic Liturgy”, is understood to depict the worship of angelic beings in the heavenly temple. The weekly Sabbath liturgy guides its participants on a virtual tour of heaven, culminating in a vision of God's throne. According to Davila:

We must presumably think in terms of a weekly cultic drama, perhaps supplemented with the angelic songs that the text mentions without giving them to us, which led its participants into and through the macrocosmic temple (or guided them in its liturgical building) ... The macrocosmic cult was understood to be staffed by angels, but the participants in this weekly cultic drama must necessarily have taken on the roles of these

10 Josephus, *Jewish War* 6.438 (Thackeray, LCL), as cited in Mason, ‘You Are a Priest Forever’, 154.

11 See *ibid.*, 163.

12 Florentino García Martínez et al., *Qumran Cave 11*, vol. XXIII, Discoveries in the Judaean Desert (Oxford; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1998), 266, 69–70.

13 Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 132–133.

14 I.e., 4Q403 11:21 and 4Q405 8–9:5–6.

angelic priests and so have undergone a process of temporary transformation or angelification on some level.¹⁵

Crispin Fletcher-Louis¹⁶ further argues that the angelic priesthood depicted in the *Songs* should be interpreted as the exalted human community. The human participants “perform” a ritualized, communal heavenly ascent and imagine themselves participating in the liturgy of the heavenly temple. The earthly priesthood ritually becomes the heavenly priesthood.

The “chief priesthood” of the community “is identified with the Glory of God of Ezekiel’s throne vision (Ezekiel 1:26–28).”¹⁷ If Melchizedek can be interpreted to be the leader of the heavenly priesthood in this Angelic Liturgy, as mentioned previously, then it is not unreasonable, in light of the above statements, to suggest that the *maskil*, or leader of the exalted Qumran priesthood, could have been seen as playing the role of Melchizedek, the celestial high priest.

Another related aspect attributed to the earthly priesthood in the *Songs*, according to Fletcher-Louis, is that during this ritual journey through heaven, they become known not only as “exalted ones,” but also as “gods” (*’elohim* and *’elim*).¹⁸ This notion of deification parallels references in 11Q13 to Melchizedek as *’elohim*. The scroll depicts Melchizedek as the *’elohim* mentioned in Psalm 82:1 who stands in the divine council and passes judgment. Although the author seems to call Melchizedek a god, he differentiates between him and the Most High by referring to the latter as *’El*. In any case, besides rewritten bible texts like the *Genesis Apocryphon*, all of the documents that are understood to make reference to Melchizedek at Qumran see him as this angelic or divine figure who is often a heavenly priest. They generally seem to have no interest in the Genesis 14 story of Melchizedek as an earthly king. Why the gap?

Davila outlines the “flow of the Melchizedek tradition as preserved in our sources.”

He begins as a king and priest of pre-Davidic Jerusalem and then, some centuries later, is described also as a divine heavenly being, a god (*elohim* or *theos*) who defeats and destroys the forces of evil at the last judgment and delivers souls from the underworld.

15 James R. Davila, “Exploring the Mystical Background of the Dead Sea Scrolls,” in *The Oxford Handbook of the Dead Sea Scrolls*, ed. Timothy H. Lim and John J. Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 443.

16 Crispin H.T. Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam: Liturgical Anthropology in the Dead Sea Scrolls*, Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah, (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2002), 392.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

Davila continues by asking, “How do we get from Melchizedek the priest-king to Melchizedek the god?”

My proposal is this: his divinity was not invented in the Second Temple period; rather it was suppressed in the Hebrew Bible. In other words, the apparent change from man to god is a matter of suppression of older traditions that were excluded from the biblical canon, not of innovation in the Second Temple literature.¹⁹

This is a bold statement, to be sure, but one for which I have found significant evidence in my research on the Psalms and royal traditions in the Bible. Perhaps not for the figure of Melchizedek specifically, but there is evidence in the Hebrew Bible that Israel’s kings were, in some cases, understood to be both priests and angelic or divine beings. Examples of this type of belief were by no means exclusive to Qumran, but are to be found in a much wider selection of First and Second Temple Jewish literature.

Sacral, Angelic, and Divine Kingship in the Hebrew Bible

I will first look at some of the examples of sacral, angelic, and divine kingship that are to be found in the Hebrew Scriptures. The Psalms are one of the principal sources that the author of Hebrews is drawing on; he cites: Psalms 2, 22, 27, 45, 95, 102, 104, 110, and 118. A number of these have been designated by modern scholars as “royal psalms” which arguably had their life setting in the royal cult of the Jerusalem Temple during the time of the Monarchy.

The author of Hebrews applies psalms attributed to King David to the person of Jesus Christ. Psalm 2 refers to the Davidic king as the LORD’s “anointed” and has Yahweh declare to the king: “Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee.” Then, in Psalm 110, the king is permitted to sit down at God’s right hand, and is promised by God the eternal priesthood “after the order of Melchizedek.”²⁰ Psalm 45:6–7 may be controversial for modern exegetes, but would have been a perfect example of what the author of Hebrews was looking for. After describing the glory of the Davidic king in elaborate language, the Psalmist declares:

19 James R. Davila, “Melchizedek: King, Priest, and God,” in *The Seductiveness of Jewish Myth: Challenge or Response* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1997), 224.

20 Davila states that “Psalm 110 seems to hint that there was a priesthood of Melchizedek active in the Jerusalem temple and tied to the Davidic king.” Davila, *Liturgical Works*, 164.

Your throne, O God, endures forever and ever. Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity; you love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your companions.

The most straightforward interpretation of this passage, in light of its likely *Sitz im Leben*, is that it is referring to the Davidic king as *'elohim* in a fashion similar to what we saw in *11QMelchizedek*. Collectively, these biblical psalms depict, arguably in the pre-exilic period, the Israelite king as a figure who is the son of God, the messiah, a priest after the order of Melchizedek, enthroned at the right hand of God, and worthy of being called a god. Passages like Isaiah 9:6, where the royal figure is named “The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace” can be added to this picture. In the LXX (Isa. 9:5), this royal figure becomes “the angel of great counsel.” Although I am not arguing that all Second Temple parties were interpreting these texts in this way, we can see that these ideas were already potentially present in the biblical text itself and should not be surprised that later exegetes were reading the text in this way. In the case of Psalm 110, for example, David Mitchell suggests that the author of *11QMelch* may have drawn on Psalm 110 for his description of Melchizedek as the angelic warrior who descends from heaven in judgment. Mitchell comments:

Such a figure appears to have been influenced by this psalm [Psalm 110], the interpreter apparently understanding על־דברתי (v. 4) as *on my account* or *according to my promise*, and Melchizedek as vocative: that is, *You are a priest forever according to my promise, Melchizedek ...* *11QMelch* therefore seems to reflect an early understanding that the central figure of this psalm was to appear from the heavenly realms to wage cosmic war.²¹

There are a number of other biblical texts that seem to perpetuate these royal motifs. In the book of 1 Chronicles 29:23, we are presented with Solomon sitting on “the Lord’s throne.” In 1 Samuel 29:9 and 2 Samuel 14:17, 20, we see the king being compared to an angel of God. Zechariah 12:8 is especially relevant:

21 David C. Mitchell, *The Message of the Psalter: An Eschatological Programme in the Books of Psalms*, Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series (Sheffield, England: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 259–260.

On that day the LORD will put a shield about the inhabitants of Jerusalem so that the feeblest among them on that day shall be like David, and the house of David shall be like God, like the angel of the LORD, at their head.

Not only was the king seen as angelic or divine, but in the Second Temple period, at least, the high priest was also seen in this light. We read in Malachi 2:7 that “the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and men should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the angel of the LORD of hosts.” As noted by Fletcher-Louis, this idea is picked up and developed by the author of Jubilees, where, in chapter 31, Isaac blesses Levi and his posterity that they will “serve in [God’s] sanctuary as the angels of the presence and the holy ones.”²² It is apparent that the notion of earthly priests serving in the heavenly sanctuary was not limited to a small group of Qumran sectarians.

Margaret Barker describes a Second Temple ritual in which the high priest, Simon, emerges from the temple and is treated as if he were Yahweh. She notes, speaking of the situation depicted in ben Sira 50:17:

When he emerged from the holy of holies he was like the morning star, like the sun shining on the temple; his very presence made the court of the temple glorious. When he had poured the libation, the trumpet sounded and “all the people together ... fell to the ground upon their faces to worship (*proskunein*) their LORD ...” (Ben Sira 50:17). The most natural way to read this is that they were worshipping the high priest, or rather, Yahweh whom he represented.²³

To state this in other words, Ben Sira records a Second Temple ritual in which the high priest plays the role of Yahweh, the divine warrior, emerging from the heavenly temple in great glory. While we may note the similarity of these ideas to those described in 11QMelch, the significance of the existence of this description in Ben Sira is that it indicates that these themes were not preserved by the Qumran sectarians alone.

²² Fletcher-Louis, *All the Glory of Adam*, 14.

²³ Margaret Barker, *Temple Themes in Christian Worship* (London; New York: T & T Clark, 2007), 77.

Philo's View of Moses's Melchizedek-like Superiority to Aaron

Arguments for the superiority of the Melchizedek over the Aaronid priesthood are central to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Mason asserts, regarding the Qumran tradition: "Interestingly, there is no hint ... of tensions between this angelic priesthood and that of the Levites."²⁴ However, once again we see that outside writings preserve a tradition in which, similar to that of Hebrews, the one priesthood is superior to the other.

Philo saw Moses in much the same light as we have been discussing for Melchizedek and other royal and priestly figures. For Philo, Moses is highly exalted—he even sees fit to call Moses “the god and king of his people.”²⁵ It is Moses who, acting as a representative of God, anoints Aaron as high priest and inaugurates the Levitical/Aaronid Priesthood. The Aaronid high priest, however, never held the same position as Moses.

Philo saw a difference between the Mosaic and Aaronic priesthoods, which he refers to respectively as the “Mystery of Moses” (the Higher Mystery or Way of Sophia) and the “Mystery of Aaron” (the Lesser Mystery or Way of the Law).²⁶ Both mysteries were part of a single mystery, but one way was a preparation for the other.²⁷ The difference between the two lay in the ability of the higher to allow the initiate to approach God, while the lesser was only able to apprehend the “Powers” (angels).

Moses was the priest *par excellence* and taught Aaron what he had learned from God.²⁸ Aaron did not participate with Moses in the theophany and revelation on Mt. Sinai; he did not receive the covenant, and was not transfigured as was Moses. Goodenough explains Philo's view of the limitations of the Aaronid order:

24 Mason, “SBL 2007 Presentation: Hebrews 7:3, Melchizedek, and the Nature of Jesus' Priesthood,” 19, paper presented at the Book of Hebrews Consultation, Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, San Diego, Calif., November 17, 2007; accessed online at <http://www.hebrews.unibas.ch/documents/2007Mason.pdf>. I would argue, however, that the *Songs of the Sabbath Sacrifice* does appear to make a distinction between the quality/efficacy of the angelic and human priesthoods.

25 Philo, *Life of Moses*, 1:158, as cited in Margaret Barker, *The Hidden Tradition of the Kingdom of God* (London: SPCK, 2007), 38. Philo's statement is likely based on a reading of Exodus 7:1.

26 Philo, *De Specialibus Legibus*, i, 229f., as referenced in Erwin Ramsdell Goodenough, *By Light, Light; the Mystic Gospel of Hellenistic Judaism* (Amsterdam: Philo Press, 1969), 115.

27 Goodenough, *By Light, Light*, 95.

28 *Ibid.*, 189.

For high as the Mystery of Aaron could lift men, even up to cosmic proportions, it still left them material creatures, shut off, as was Aaron himself, from sharing in the realm of the incorporeal. The Aaronic initiate knew that the immaterial world was there beyond, but he was always shut in by material incense from any mystical union ... the Mystery of Aaron was a part of literal Judaism, quite distinct from the higher worship offered men by Moses.²⁹

Although these were categories applied by Philo to contemporaneous students of Judaism, he drew on historical traditions. Philo understood that the priesthood of Moses was “the cosmic priesthood and perfection” (cf. Heb. 7:11). Although he passed on some priestly prerogatives to Aaron and his sons, and “initiated” them into the priestly office, Moses remained God’s representative and continued to be the true intercessor for the people. Moses’ mediation was superior and his sacrifices more acceptable; the Aaronid priests were secondary in position.³⁰

Many similarities can be identified between Philo’s ideas on the superiority of the one order over the other and the parallel discussion in Hebrews. I am not arguing that the author of Hebrews was a student of, or in any way directly dependent on, Philo, but it seems clear that they both draw on some of the same general traditions—traditions which can be traced back to the theology and practices of the royal cult of the Israelite monarchy. While some Jewish groups went to great lengths to tie Melchizedek to a purely mortal identity by making him the son of Noah and so forth, there were many Jews, and not only those who contributed to the Qumran library, who preferred to see an exalted, heavenly Melchizedek, perhaps following the pattern of the ancient kings and priests who were angelified or deified and given a throne at the right hand of God. Indeed, their reading of the biblical texts placed Melchizedek, the king of ancient Salem, as the predecessor of the Davidic kings, and greater than Aaron, Levi, or even Abraham.

Conclusion

In light of these ancient traditions, it would seem natural for Christians to make a connection between Jesus and Melchizedek. The ancient priest-kings “after

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid., 192.

the order of Melchizedek” were messiahs, or “anointed ones.” The Christians understood them to be types of the long-awaited Messiah who would come down from heaven to restore and renew. Jesus the Messiah was raised up, crowned with glory, and given a throne at the right hand of the Father. He was the Firstborn, the Son of God, and the High Priest of the Presence. He was the LORD, without beginning of days or end of years. The priesthood of Melchizedek was the eternal, unchangeable priesthood he possessed. Jesus was after the order of Melchizedek, and Melchizedek was after the order of Jesus.

The Reception of the Jobraham Narratives in Jewish Thought

Nicholas J. Ellis

Introduction

The influences that guide modern Christian thought on trial and temptation are varied and multi-layered, both conscious and subconscious. For example, along with the influence of certain Biblical statements (e.g., Paul's assurances that believers will not be "tested beyond their are able," Satan as Tempter and Enemy; cf. 1 Cor 7:5, 10:13; Eph 6:12; also the devouring lion of 1 Peter 5:8), the reception and development of these concepts within post-biblical literature from Boethius to Marlowe and from Milton to Al Pacino have fundamentally shaped how we think about the process of evil. This reception and reworking of biblical thought has contributed to a mythological, theological and cosmological framework of testing that informs the roles of God, Satan, and the human nature. But what of those texts and communities that predated these medieval and modern influences? To what texts, traditions, myths, and stories did Jews, including the early Christians, turn to explain a framework for testing and temptation? In this paper, I examine how the Abraham and Job testing narratives provided a hermeneutical touchstone for ancient explanations of biblical testing and temptation, and examine a possible example of one such reading from the New Testament.¹

1 At the outset, I am conscious of the tendency within comparative-religious research to flatten the historical and theological voices of antiquity. This essay may unfortunately resemble this charge due to the lack of space available to appropriately nuance the historical situation of the various sources. In this wide ranging study of the reception of the Job and Abraham traditions, I am hesitant to identify many firm genetic relationships. There are times when interpretive traditions originate from, and can be traced to common sources beyond the OT text. However, and more frequently, interpretive similarities stem from what has been described in other disciplines as a sort of polygenesis: two interpretations that relate to a similar text from a relatively close time period will often come to similar conclusions. The term polygenesis originates from Weitzman, *The Syriac Version of the Old Testament*, in the area of Peshitta studies, where Weitzman attempts to identify the relationships between Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac textual traditions of the Old Testament. I find the term also helpful to describe certain interpretive conclusions that, while similar in the interpretation, cannot be traced to a common textual or traditional source.

Canonical Job and Abraham

The biblical narratives of Job and Abraham offered to their later interpreters many apparent parallels and connections. Both men were wealthy yet hospitable foreigners and prayerful intercessors who were tested through their children. As a result of their endurance under trial they were blessed and named with those who fear God.² The differences between the two OT accounts are also notable. The satanic figure, so prominent in the action and dialogue of the opening scenes of the Job narrative, has no place within the canonical Abraham narrative. In Gen 22 God alone tests Abraham, while in Job 1–3 Satan, operating under divine authority and limitation, causes the suffering.³ Abraham participates directly in the test of obedience, whereas Job remains largely unaware of the satanic and divine manoeuvring of his fate. The opening scene of Job centres on heaven, while the Abraham dialogue occurs entirely in the earthly realm. Job involves a debate between God's declaration of Job's righteousness and Satan's claim that Job obeys merely as a calculated effort to gain divine blessing, with the resulting narrative tension of whether Satan will prove God naive in his defence of Job's righteousness, or whether God will demonstrate the justness of his declaration that Job is faithful. In the canonical Abraham narrative, however, the tension focuses on obedience to the divine command and the survival of the promised Isaac.⁴

Job and Abraham in Comparison

In spite of the canonical dissimilarities, however, Jewish interpreters often flattened the differences between the canonical accounts by interweaving ele-

2 Cf. von Rad, *Das Opfer des Abraham*, p. 24; Wenham, Hess and Satterthwaite, *He Swore an Oath: Biblical Themes from Genesis 12–50*, p. 110; Japhet, "The Trial of Abraham and the Test of Job: How Do They Differ?"; Michel, "Ijob und Abraham: Zur Reception von Gen 22 in Ijob 1–2 und 42,7–17", pp. 75–76; Veijola, "Abraham und Hiob: Das literarische und theologische Verhältnis von Gen 22 und der Hiob-Novelle"; Ruiten, "Abraham, Job and the Book of Jubilees: The Intertextual Relationship of Genesis 22:1–19, Job 1:1–2:13 and Jubilees 17:15–18:19", p. 66; Huizenga, "The Battle for Isaac: Exploring the Composition and Function of the Akedah in the Book of Jubilees"; Ehrlich, "Hiob in der jüdischen Tradition".

3 Ruiten, "Abraham, Job and the Book of Jubilees: The Intertextual Relationship of Genesis 22:1–19, Job 1:1–2:13 and Jubilees 17:15–18:19", p. 70.

4 Cf. Japhet, "The Trial of Abraham and the Test of Job: How Do They Differ?", pp. 161–163.

ments of one story into another.⁵ Where the biblical narratives left gaps between the stories of Job and Abraham, traditions supplied additional features. Those places where the canonical accounts differed were at times amplified or attenuated depending on the purposes of the interpreter.

Within the biblical chronology, for example, sources commonly portrayed Abraham and Job as patriarchal contemporaries. It is perhaps telling that the writing of the Job material at Qumran occurs in paleo-Hebrew script (the only such text outside the Pentateuch found at Qumran), which may imply an understanding within the sectarian community that Job was written by Moses; similarly, the Peshitta (the Syriac translation of the Old Testament) placed Job immediately after the Pentateuch to locate the work within the patriarchal tradition.⁶ Both *L.A.B.* 8:8 and *T. Job* 1:6 describe Job as from the family of Esau (building on Job 1:1 that he was from the East), and that he married Dinah, Jacob's daughter. Nettler has suggested that this "genealogical nexus" in the pseudepigraphical literature forms a legitimisation of Job's position in the patriarchal line.⁷ Similar views on Job's contemporary status with Abraham were common in later interpretation, as noted by R. Simeon b. Lakish in the name of R. Kappara in *Pesikta Rabbati*.⁸ Tracing this tradition in both rabbinic and patristic sources, Joanna Weinberg has suggested that remnants of this

5 A point made in detail by Glatzer, *The Dimensions of Job*, pp. 16–24.

6 Gordis, *The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job*, p. 216.

7 In Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, p. 839. *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, or Pseudo-Philo, is considered to be composed at latest by the second century CE, probably in Hebrew as reconstructed from the extant Latin manuscripts; so Harrington (in *Ibid.*, pp. 297–230; also by Davila, *Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?*, p. 157). The *Testament of Job*, however, is more debated: surviving in Greek, old church Slavonic, and Coptic, the earliest manuscripts are from the first half of the fifth century, some claim a later Christian provenance (so *Ibid.*, p. 159). while others propose an earlier Jewish composition around the first century (so Spittler in Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, p. 833., as well as Rahnenführer, "Das Testament des Hiob und das Neue Testament", pp. 88–93; Spittler, "The Testament of Job: A History of Research and Interpretation", pp. 75–130 with Montanist interpolations from the second century CE).

8 "Job lived during the time of our father, Abraham"; in Braude, *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*, p. 212. While *Pesikta Rabbati* is quite late, it cites traditions from primarily third and fourth-century Palestinian Amoraim. Here, R. Simeon, a second generation Amora from Palestine cites R. Eleazar Kappara, a fifth generation Tannaitic rabbi from Palestine. Similar accounts occur in the rabbinic *Targum of Job* 2:9; 20:9; the midrashim (e.g., *Gen. Rab.* 47:4; 57:4; 61:4; *Exod. Rab.* 1:9), the Jerusalem Talmud (e.g., *y. Sota* 20c); and in the Babylonian Talmud (*b. Baba Bathra* 15a; *b. Sota* 11a; *b. Sanh.* 106a).

tradition can be seen in Origen's commentary on Job (early third century), where the suggestion is made that Moses either wrote or translated the book of Job while in Egypt.⁹ Other traditional comparisons included the role of Satan, the propriety of each man's speech, and their similar status as 'friends of God'. At times, the satanic element from Job 1 entered into the Abraham traditions. Both men were commonly portrayed as having fought against Satan and prevailed: Abraham, when he burned down his father's idols while in Ur and was thrown into the fiery furnace (*Jub.* 12:12–15), and Job when he destroyed the satanic idol, intentionally instigated war between himself and Satan (*T. Job* 5:2).¹⁰ A great deal of attention is given to how Abraham and Job spoke to God. A tradition that Abraham passed his test because he did not "speak improperly" goes back to *Jub.* 19:3–8 and the eleventh test at the death of Sarah, when "he was found faithful, controlled of spirit, and he said not a single word" against God. A similar tradition is presupposed in the much later *Tg. Ps.-J.* to Gen 15:6: "and he had faith in the Word of the Lord, and it was accounted to him for merit, because he did not reproach God with words". In the rabbinical sources Abraham's silence is taken as a subtle jab at Job, whom some considered to have defied God "by his words".¹¹ It is not uncommon to find Abraham and Job appearing together in the church Fathers. For example *1 Clem.* 17:2 notes that Abraham "was called the friend of God" (καὶ φίλος προσηγορεύθη τοῦ Θεοῦ), and then in the next verse declares that "Job was righteous and blameless, one that was true and honoured God and abstained from all evil" (ὼς δὲ ἦν δίκαιος καὶ ἀμεμπτος, ἀληθινός, θεοσεβής, ἀπεχόμενος ἀπὸ παντὸς κακοῦ).

9 Cf. Weinberg, "Job Versus Abraham: The Quest for the Perfect God-Fearer in Rabbinic Tradition", p. 287, from the text in Migne, *Patrologia Graecae* 17:371–522.

10 *Jubilees* is a Jewish text written perhaps as early as mid-second century B.C.E. Found in Qumran, this retelling of the Genesis story was translated from Hebrew into Greek, Syriac, Latin, and Ethiopic, the preservation of which reveals a remarkably strong effective history within certain Judeo-Christian communities through the first several centuries of the common era. See especially VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees*, p. iv.

11 Cf. Hainthaler, "Von der Ausdauer Jobs habt ihr gehört" (*Jak* 5:11): *Zur Bedeutung des Buches Job im Neuen Testament*, pp. 323–329. The emphasis on speech and words unites Job and Abraham especially in retellings of Gen 22 (on which see below). Japhet, "The Trial of Abraham and the Test of Job: How Do They Differ?", p. 169 has noted how Abraham's silence at the Akedah stands in contrast to his previous loquacity with regard to Sodom.

Debates on Who was Greater

Within these traditional comparisons, from the Second Temple period onward we find an ongoing debate on which of the two men was greater.¹² The co-existence of these two paradigmatic heroes eventually raised a problem: were the two men of equal stature, or was one subordinate to the other? The case for each man was made by various interpreters from both Second Temple and later sources: Abraham the father and patron of Israel, Job the man of patient faith.¹³

Abraham was Greater than Job

Though not unanimous, a large majority of the accounts from antiquity present Abraham as greater than Job. Nahum Glatzer has suggested that in the pseudepigraphical literature we already find texts that implicitly elevate Abraham above Job as the better example of faith.¹⁴ For example, Recension (A) of the *T. Ab.* presents the hero Abraham as the “beloved friend of God” (1:6; 2:3; 4:7; 8:2, 4; 9:7; 15:12–14; 16:9; 20:14), the “friend of strangers” (1:2; 2:2). In 15:14–15 the archangel explicitly proclaims to God Abraham’s superiority over Job: “I refrained from touching [Abraham] because ... he was your friend And there is no person like him on earth, not even Job, the wondrous man” (15:14–15).¹⁵ For this stream of traditional thought, Job, as “wondrous” as he was, could not be allowed to surpass Abraham, the prime patriarch and progenitor of the Jewish

12 Cf. Glatzer, “The God of Job and the God of Abraham”, p. 48; Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, pp. 400–419; Veijola, “Abraham und Hiob: Das literarische und theologische Verhältnis von Gen 22 und der Hiob-Novelle”, pp. 127–128.

13 Cf. Weinberg, “Job Versus Abraham: The Quest for the Perfect God-Fearer in Rabbinic Tradition”, p. 282.

14 Glatzer, “The God of Job and the God of Abraham”, pp. 50–51 who suggests that the acceptance of the *T. Job* by sectarian groups may have caused the rejection of Job for Abraham.

15 According to Ruiten, “Abraham, Job and the Book of Jubilees: The Intertextual Relationship of Genesis 22:1–19, Job 1:1–2:13 and Jubilees 17:15–18:19”, p. 58, this is the first time in our literature that Abraham was exalted above Job. There is some debate, however, on whether *T. Ab.* should be read as an early Jewish text (so Dale Alison, *Testament of Abraham* pp. 28–29), or to read this within the context of the extant fourth or fifth-century Sahidic Christian manuscript on which it has been preserved (so Davila, *Provenance of the Pseudepigrapha: Jewish, Christian, or Other?*, p. 207).

people.¹⁶ Similarly, *Apoc. Ab.* 13 inserts heavenly and a satanic elements into Abraham's test from Job: Abraham has access to the very throne of God, and when he is tested by Azazel at the Akedah the Tempter is told to "leave this man alone, for you can not lead him astray, you can not tempt the righteous."¹⁷

The debate between Abraham and Job often focused on their response to trial. As is frequently the case in the rabbinic literature, *B. Baba Bathra* 15a–b refashions the dialogue between God and Satan in Job 1:7 into a debate on whether Job or Abraham was the most righteous. Satan approaches the throne in Heaven and states: "Sovereign of the Universe, I have traversed the whole world and found none so faithful as thy servant Abraham" In response, God answers: "ah, but have you considered my servant Job?", and in doing so names Job as possibly equal to Abraham. In the ensuing debate between God and Satan, R. Levi takes Abraham's side, noting that "both Satan and Peninah had a pious purpose [in acting as adversaries]: Satan, when he saw God inclined to favour Job said, 'Far be in that God should forget the love of Abraham'". In this manner, Abraham's superiority over Job was defended.

This statement of Abraham's love, already hinted at previously, appeals to another point of interpretation in which Abraham and Job's appellations, despite being named as "God-Fearers" in the canonical works, were modified to suggest that they were in fact "friends of God" or "God-lovers". This reading appears in its earliest stages at Isa 41:8 and 2Chr 20:7 and previews a dominant interpretation of the patriarchs' love being greater than fear that runs through the second temple period and beyond. *Jubilees* proclaims that Abraham, as a result of his final trial, was a "lover of God" (18:15–16; 23:10; 24:11), "recorded on the heavenly tablets as God's friend" (19:9). Philo's *Abr.* 170 states: "mastered by his love (ἔρωτι) for God, Abraham mightily overcame all distraction by family affections". For Philo, Abraham's fondness and love (πόθος ... καὶ φίλτρα) for Isaac did not overcome his love for God. Found in Qumran and elsewhere, the Damascus Document (CD) 3:2–3 records that Abraham was deemed a "lover of God" because he kept the commandments. This same appellation is common in Patristic works such as *1 Clem.*, which declares that

16 Cf. Weinberg, "Job Versus Abraham: The Quest for the Perfect God-Fearer in Rabbinic Tradition", p. 291; Delcor, *Le Testament d'Abraham. Introduction, traduction du text grec et commentaire de la recension grecque longue*, p. 76.

17 Trsl. by Box, *The Apocalypse of Abraham*; the *Apoc. Abr.* is known only in an old Slavonic translation and several Russian redactions, none of which are earlier than the 14th century. However, the *urtext* is probably Hebrew, composed after A.D. 70 and probably before the middle of the second century; so Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, p. 683.

Abraham's testing resulted in blessing, and twice gives the title "friend of God" (10:1 "ὁ φίλος προσαγορευθεὶς" and 17:2 "φίλος προσηγoreύθη τοῦ Θεοῦ"), and is likewise quite common in rabbinic literature.¹⁸

In contrast to Abraham's love for God, the continued appellation of Job as a "fearer of God" (Job 1:8–9; 4:6) became an indication of Job's inferiority to Abraham. A baraita in *y. Ber.* 14b, while enumerating the various types of Pharisees, claims that "a God-fearing Pharisee is exemplified by Job, a God-loving Pharisee is exemplified by Abraham; the noblest of them all is the God-loving Pharisee like Abraham". This approach to the debate is seen in the rabbis as early as *m. Sota* 5:5, and continues through the Mishnah, Tosefta, the midrashim, and the Talmud.¹⁹ The debate would also reveal, however, that not all agreed that Job was inferior to Abraham, on which see below.²⁰

Finally, in later works the emphasis on Abraham and Job's speech noted above would become a point of tension between the two men. According to the statement traditionally attributed to the second generation Amora R. Yochanan cited in *Deut. Rab* 11:3, whereas Abraham responded well to trials, Job "could not but address God with reproaches".²¹ This polemic against Job may be in view as late as the *Tg. Ps.-J* on Gen 15:6: "And [Abraham] had faith ... and He counted it to him for merit that he did not cast reproaches against Him".²² In *Avoth de-R. Nathan* (A) 7, when Job challenges God by pointing to his own good deeds (from Job 31:17, 20), God's rebuke come in the form of a reference to Abraham: "you have not yet reached half the measure of Abraham".²³ Similarly,

18 Cf. Irenaeus *Her.* 5:3 and 7:2. In rabbinic literature, *m. Avoth* 5:3; *y. Ber.* 9:14b; *y. Sota* 5:20c; *Gen. Rab.* 61; *Mek. Exod.* 14:15; *b. Sota* 31a. Note also the Vulgate on Judith 8:11–27 calling Abraham *dei amicus*.

19 For example, cf. *m. Eduyot* 2:10, *Tosefta Shabbat* 13:2. *Semahot* 8, *Sifre Deut.* 32, *Midrash Tehillim* 26:2, *Mekhilta ba-Hodesh* 10, *b. Baba Bathra* 15b and 16a; *Sifre Num* 112.

20 For detailed studies on the multi-generational rabbinic debate on fear vs. love in the Haggadah, cf. Buchler, *Studies in Sin and Atonement in the Rabbinic Literature of the First Century*, pp. 122–211; Urbach, *The Sages: Their Concepts and Beliefs*, pp. 406–419; Ehrlich, "Hiob in der jüdischen Tradition", p. 49; Weinberg, "Job Versus Abraham: The Quest for the Perfect God-Fearer in Rabbinic Tradition", p. 288; Glatzer, "The God of Job and the God of Abraham".

21 R. Yochanan bar Nappacha was a second generation Amora active in Palestine. This comparison between Abraham and Job's words is also seen explicitly in *b. Baba Bathra* 16a; *Gen. Rab* 19:2 in the name of R. Abba and *Gen. Rab.* 49:17 in the name of R. Levi.

22 Noted in Schreiner, "Der gottesfürchtige Rebell, oder wie die Rabbinen die Frömmigkeit Ijobs deuteten", 169; here again we find the combination of Gen 15 and Gen 22 with the Job narrative.

23 Braude, *Pesikta Rabbati: Discourses for Feasts, Fasts and Special Sabaaths*, pp. 198–190.

in *Pesiqta Rabbathi* 47:3 (190a) R. Hanina bar Papa claims, also in the name of R. Yochanan, that “had Job not raised a cry, even as now we say in the *Tefilla* ‘God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob’ we would also be saying ‘and God of Job’”. Abraham’s trials are also seen to have exceeded those of Job in difficulty, as in the *Tanhuma* midrash (B.) *Wa-Yishlah* 8, where Eliphaz says to Job “Are your deeds like those of Abraham? He was tried ten time and stood up to them all ... while you faced one trial only”.

Job as Equal to or Greater than Abraham

Despite the dominant tradition of Abraham’s superiority to Job, a parallel tradition saw Job as Abraham’s equal, or even at times as his superior. This is true in the love/fear debate, seen as early as *T. Job*. 1:27 where Job states, “Out of love will I endure all things until death, whatever comes upon me”. Agreeing with this evaluation of Job’s motivation from love rather than fear, R. Joshua in *m. Sota* 5:5 argues against his predecessor, Rabban Yochanan b. Zakkai, who had in the same passage pronounced Abraham superior to Job. Joshua states: “Who will remove the dirt from your eyes, Rabban Yohanan b. Zakkai? For you expounded your entire life that Job served the Omnipresent only out of fear (מִיִּרְאָה אֱלֹהִים) and now has not Joshua, the disciple of your disciple, taught that he did what he did out of love (מֵאַהֲבָה)?” The *Tosefta* appears to ratify this view in *t. Sota* 6:1:

a fearer of God (Gen 22:12) is said in relation to Abraham and a fearer of God is said in relation to Job (Job 1:1). Just as the fear of God is said in connection with Abraham stems from love, so too, the fear of God said in connection with Job stems from love.²⁴

Occasionally we find Job mentioned as a superior model of faith than Abraham, as in the declaration attributed to R. Yochanan in *b. Baba Bathra* 15b, who states “greater praise is accorded to Job than to Abraham, for of Abraham it is written, ‘for now I know that you fear God (Gen 22:12),’ whereas of Job it is written, ‘that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil (Job 1:1)’”. In Yochanan’s evaluation Job is greater given God’s recognition of

24 This positive reading of Job continues through *b. Sota* 31a, *y. Sota* 20d, and *Tg. Ps.-J.* on Gen 15:6, as noted in Weinberg, “Job Versus Abraham: The Quest for the Perfect God-Fearer in Rabbinic Tradition”, p. 289; also Ruiten, “Abraham, Job and the Book of Jubilees: The Intertextual Relationship of Genesis 22:1–19, Job 1:1–2:13 and Jubilees 17:15–18:19”, p. 59.

Job's righteousness even without a test, whereas Abraham was required to face ten trials before the declaration of friendship. Also in *b. Baba Batra* 15b, Job was called four different names: Pious, Righteous, Devout, and Turning from Evil, whereas Gen 22:1 only calls Abraham righteous, perhaps suggesting an evaluation of Job as the greater of the two.

The Jobraham Narratives: An Assimilated Tradition

One of the reoccurring literary features in the retellings of the Job and Abraham traditions is the tendency to assimilate the two testing narratives, especially Gen 22 and Job 1–3.²⁵ One of the primary sources for this integration can be found in the opening line of Gen. 22, which states “now after these דברים, God tested Abraham”. Interpreters were able to choose to interpret or translate דברים as “words” rather than “things”, as seen in the καὶ μετὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταύτα in the LXX. As Gen 21 recorded no “words”, some interpreters imagined words between Isaac and Ishmael that caused God to test Isaac's faithfulness.²⁶ However, one tradition with a remarkably strong and lasting attestation told of “words in heaven” spoken between God and the angelic beings which preceeded Abraham's test at the binding of Isaac.

The earliest record of this reading occurs in *Jub.* 17, where “voices in heaven” debated the worth of Abraham's faithfulness. Up to this point in *Jubilees* Abraham had proven himself through a series of tests. In none of these trials does God himself test Abraham, but rather the angelic prince Mastema is responsible for Abraham's trials. In *Jub.* 17, as the heavenly council speaks of Abraham's faithfulness in all things (17:15), once again Mastema appears on the scene, calling into question Abraham's love for God above his love for Isaac. Therefore on Mastema's initiative Abraham's love is tested at the Akedah.

As a result of this interweaving of heavenly material into the Abraham narrative, several scholars have suggested that *Jub.* 17 demonstrates a high degree of dependence on the Job narrative.²⁷ The insertion of the Mastema dialogue sub-

25 On narrative assimilation within the Hebrew Bible, cf. Zakovitch, “Assimilation in the Biblical Narrative”, and specifically on Abraham and Job cf. Ehrlich, “Hiob in der jüdischen Tradition”; Weinberg, “Job Versus Abraham: The Quest for the Perfect God-Fearer in Rabbinic Tradition”; Michel, “Ijob und Abraham: Zur Reception von Gen 22 in Ijob 1–2 und 42,7–17”, pp. 74–75.

26 So *Gen. Rab.* 55.4; *Tan. B. Ve-yera* 42; *b. San.* 89b.

27 Cf. Moltz, “God and Abraham in the Binding of Isaac”, p. 67; VanderKam, “The Aqedah, Jubilees, and Pseudojubilees”, p. 249; Kister, “Observations on Aspects of Exegesis, Tra-

stantially lessens the canonical differences between the two tests: the role of the cosmic has been heightened, and the challenge is now between God and Mastema rather than between God and Abraham (so *Jub.* 17 where “God already knew that Abraham was faithful”).²⁸ Furthermore, rather than the test proving *to God* that Abraham feared him (Gen 22:12), the Akedah of *Jubilees* now approximates the Job narrative in God’s demonstration *to others* of what God already knew: *Jub.* 18:11–12: “For now *I have shown* that you fear the Lord”.²⁹ But shown to whom, one might ask? This tradition preserved in *Jubilees* appears in several other Second Temple texts that expand even further on the narrative. In the Qumran document 4Q225, whereas *Jubilees* speaks of just Mastema, 4Q225, while dependent on the *Jubilees* narrative, furthermore imagines entire armies of supernatural beings, some with God and others with Mastema. As Abraham is about to slay Isaac, the “holy angels” stood weeping above the altar, while the “angels of Mastema” were rejoicing, saying “now he shall perish”.³⁰

As with the “words/things” ambiguity in Gen. 22:1, 22:12 held further interpretive ambiguity. James Kugel has suggested that the reading found in *Jub.* 18:11 and 4Q225 may reflect a pointing in the piel “*I have made known*” rather than the qal perfect “now I know” as in the Masoretic text (יָדַעְתִּי לְיָדַעְתִּי). That is, through Abraham’s offering of Isaac God *made known* to the entire heavenly host, and even to the entire world, *what he already knew*: Abraham’s faithfulness.³¹ Similarly, Kister’s study on Gen 22 has shown how a similar interpreta-

dition, and Theology in Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writings”, pp. 1–34; Haas, “Job’s Perseverance in the Testament of Job”, 148; Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*, 178; Ruiten, “Abraham, Job and the Book of Jubilees: The Intertextual Relationship of Genesis 22:1–19, Job 1:1–2:13 and Jubilees 17:15–18:19”, p. 63; Veijola, “Das Opfer des Abraham: Paradigma des Glaubens aus dem nachexilischen Zeitalter”, p. 151.

28 Cf. Huizenga, “The Battle for Isaac: Exploring the Composition and Function of the Akedah in the Book of Jubilees”, p. 39.

29 Cf. *T. Job* 27:6, “Then Satan, ashamed (κατασχυνθείς), departed from me.” Levenson, *The Death and Resurrection of the Beloved Son: The Transformation of Child Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity*, 176. notes in this interpretation a “transformation of inestimable significance”, in which the narrative shifts from a test of Abraham’s faith to a demonstration of his faithfulness and thereby mitigates many of the difficult questions related to the divine test.

30 A possible reference to this tradition may be found throughout *Jubilees* where Mastema continually attempts to kill the seed of Abraham. Cf. VanderKam, “The Aqedah, Jubilees, and PseudoJubilees”, 259 n. 41; Kister, “Observations on Aspects of Exegesis, Tradition, and Theology in Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writings”, 20; Martinez, “The Sacrifice of Isaac in 4Q225”, 49.

31 This reading of the Akedah is reflected in the Latin text of *L.A.B.* 32:4 “*nunc enim manifes-*

tion influenced rabbinic interpretation.³² *Gen. Rab.* 54:7 appeals to this reading of Gen 22 in combination with the love/fear tradition: “Now I have made known to all that you love me”; also *Avot de-R. Nathan* 1 33 explains that Abraham’s ten trials are so the “nations of the world may know that Abraham is worthy of receiving his reward”.³³

This mutually intertextual relationship between Job and Abraham is present in other areas as well, such as in *b. Sanh.* 89b where R. Yochanan declares in the name of R. Yose ben Zimra that the “words” of Satan had instigated the testing of Abraham. Here, the influence of the Job narrative significantly reshapes the Akedah, to the point where R. Yose places word for word phrases from canonical Job in the mouths of both Abraham and Satan from Gen 22.³⁴ Similarly, in *Num. Rab.* 17:2, at the end of the Akedah Abraham pleads that God never again afflict him with trials like “those very ones that came upon Job” (*Num. Rab.* 17:2).³⁵

Summary of the Assimilated Traditions

What then is the effect of these long-lasting and influential sets of traditions on the reception of the Abraham and Job narratives? Whereas the Torah opened questions on God’s omniscience or his goodness, the assimilation of Job’s trial into Abraham’s trial reinforced God’s omniscience, and mitigated God’s role in the testing process by recasting the prosecuting tester as an angelic or satanic figure.³⁶ In this manner, the two outstanding examples of divine testing in the Old Testament were reworked to join in wide-ranging attempts to soften

tavi ut appareres ignorantibus te”, comparable to the Latin version of *Jubilees* (quod quo nunc manifestavi quia times Deum tuum). This reading was related to me personally by J. Kugel in Oxford, Hillary Term 2010.

32 Cf. Kister, “Observations on Aspects of Exegesis, Tradition, and Theology in Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writings”, 26 n. 38.

33 Note also Saldarini, *The Fathers according to Rabbi Nathan (Abot de Rabbi Nathan) Version B: A Translation and Commentary*, p. 95. These readings have been discussed at various levels by Jacobs, “The Midrashic Background of James 11, 21–23”, p. 459; Kessler, *Bound by the Bible: Jews, Christians, and the Sacrifice of Isaac*, p. 38 n. 7.

34 Job 4:2–6 (*Sanh.* 111.7.t-w); Job 4:12 (*Sanh.* 111.7.x); Job 4:7 (*Sanh.* 111.7.y), following the rather idiosyncratic but precise paragraph system of the Neusner, *The Babylonian Talmud: A Translation and Commentary*; cf. *Gen. Rab.* 56:4.

35 Noted in Glatzer, “The God of Job and the God of Abraham”, 49.

36 As in 1 Chr 21:2 which editorialises on 2 Sam 24:1 to avoid the conclusion that God tested David.

those biblical texts that hinted at fault in the patriarchs or in God himself.³⁷ The reading of Abraham and Job in a similar manner, while in wide use, was sufficiently broad in its reach to allow great diversity within the ensuing theological discussions.³⁸

A New Testament Hermeneutic: The Epistle of James and the Jobraham Narratives

Given the reach and diversity of the exegetical creativity displayed in interpretations of Job and Abraham from the Second Temple period through Patristic and Rabbinic literature, one should consider the possible effects of this hermeneutical framework on New Testament authors. In the following section we will offer a reading of the Epistle of James that takes into account the influence of this interpretive perspective.³⁹

The first chapter of James opens with a rather notorious aporia in which the Greek term *πειρασμός* and its various cognates in the passage offer a broad range of possible semantic and theological meanings. The recipients are to be joyful whenever they encounter “tests” (*πειρασμοί*) and “trials of faith” (*δοκίμιον τῆς πίστεως*).⁴⁰ These difficulties produce the endurance (*ὑπομονή* 1:3) necessary for “maturity and completeness” (1:4). In 1:12 those who endure such *πειρασμοί* are blessed, receiving from the Lord a crown of life as a reward for approved faithfulness. Jas 1:13–14 offers a theodicy against those who would blame God for troubles: God is *ἀπείραστός* by evil, and God Himself does not *πειράζει* anyone. Rather, the source of the *πειράζειν* lies in the enticing desire (*ἐπιθυμίας*) of each person. The closing exhortation of vv. 16–18 urges the readers to reject the notion that God is responsible for leading humankind into evil and to embrace God’s unfaltering goodness (vv. 16–18).

37 Cf. Swetnam, *Jesus and Isaac: a Study of the Epistle to the Hebrews in the Light of the Aqedah*, 38.

38 Cf. Moltz, “God and Abraham in the Binding of Isaac”, 60; Kugel, *The Bible As It Was*, pp. 171–174.

39 The Epistle of James has been widely debated with regard to provenance, but is generally acknowledged to be written between 40–150 CE within a community of Jews loyal to Jesus’ messianic role, and to provide one of the best glimpses into early Jewish-Christian interpretive thought.

40 For James as a diaspora-letter, cf. Niebuhr, “Der Jakobusbrief im Licht frühjüdische Diaspora-brief”.

With few exceptions the scholarly discussion on this theme has been limited to the semantics of *πειρασμός* in 1:2–14 (e.g., the shift of meaning from “test” to “temptation”). A few studies have asked whether this theme of testing provides a unifying structural “theme”.⁴¹ Overlooked, however, has been the apparent incongruence between the author’s blunt claim in 1:14 that *οὐ πειράζει [θεός] αὐτὸς οὐδένι* (“*God Himself does not test anyone*”) and the appeal in 2:21 to the famous text from Gen 22 and the Akedah that begins in the Greek OT with the evocative statement *καὶ ἐγένετο μετὰ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα ὁ θεὸς ἐπείραξεν τὸν Ἀβραάμ* (“and it came about after these things/words that *God tested Abraham*”). The author proceeds to recall the example of patient Job (5:11), urging that those who endure (*ὑπομένω*) will be blessed (*μαχαρίζω*), an apparent return to the promise made in the letter’s opening at 1:13 where the man who endures trials (*ὁ ἀνὴρ ὑπομένει πειρασμόν*) will be blessed (*μακάριος*). As we have seen above, both of these narratives provoked in their reception history a great deal of debate, and there is little doubt that James’ recipients would be sensitive to such. And yet, the author does not hesitate to inject these narratives into his discourse.

The dissonance created by the author’s claims about testing, and his use of traditional OT narratives provokes a number of responses. On the one hand, one can overemphasize the tension in the discourse to the point of questioning the Epistle’s literary unity or theological coherence. Would the same author intentionally claim that *πειράζει δὲ θεὸς οὐδέν* and then appeal to OT narrative that undermines his theodicy? Indeed, some scholars have claimed that just such aporiae reveal either multiple and conflicting sources or traditions in James, or else serve as evidence of the Epistle’s rather weak and underdeveloped theological framework.⁴² More common, however, is the tendency to simply ignore the tension or to gloss the Epistle’s statements within a comfortable theological framework. God may test faith, but he would not “tempt to evil”. Scot McKnight, one of the few commentators to note the tension between James’ claim and the broader record of scripture, acknowledges that a biblical-theological apologetic drives his own reading of James: “It is not possible to deny that God “tests” in scriptural Judaism: Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22 and the wilderness wanderings of Exodus–Deuteronomy are driven by such a theme, and Job is filled

41 Note especially Frankemölle, “Zum Thema des Jakobusbriefes im Kontext der Rezeption von Sir 2,1–18 und 15,11–20”; Frankemölle, “Das semantische Netz des Jakobusbriefes. Zur Einheit eines umstrittenen Briefes”.

42 Notably Dibelius, *A Commentary on the Epistle of James*; Popkes, “The Composition of James and Intertextuality: An Exercise in Methodology”; Popkes, “James and Scripture: An Exercise in Intertextuality”.

with it.”⁴³ As a result, McKnight shifts the semantics of *πειράζειν* in 1:14 towards internal temptations and mitigates the theological tension.

However, this harmonizing approach glosses over two key points. While the English interpretation/translation of “test” vs. “tempt” may “fix” the theological conundrum, it also whitewashes the growing tension in the Epistle that starts in 1:2 and builds through the rest of the Epistle by the author’s choice of language. The author is surely aware of the theological question that is growing in the reader’s mind, for he inserts and then negates the interlocutor’s statement in 1:13 that “ἀπὸ θεοῦ πειράζομαι”, only to further arouse this tension by appealing to the trials of Abraham and Job. In attempting to shed theological clarity on the text, scholarship has overlooked the Judeo-Christian traditions from antiquity that reflected with great concern on whether God faced a certain responsibility and culpability for testing such biblical figures such as Adam, Abraham, Job, and Israel.⁴⁴

Abraham and Job in the Epistle of James

In Jas 2:21–23 the author points to Abraham in his argument that works, and not merely a monotheistic faith, produces righteousness before God. As proof, James appeals to two texts from the story of Abraham. On the one hand the phrase *καὶ ἐπίστευσεν Ἀβραμ τῷ θεῷ, καὶ ἐλογίσθη αὐτῷ εἰς δικαιοσύνην* from Gen 15:6 provides the biblical basis that Abraham’s righteous was “by faith”. On the other hand, James declares that “this Scripture” (i.e., Gen 15:6) “was fulfilled” (*καὶ ἐπληρώθη ἡ γραφή*) only when Abraham “worked” by offering Isaac on the altar.⁴⁵ James lays aside the immediate context of Gen 15:6 and instead treats it as a prognostication of Abraham’s faith under trial in Genesis 22.⁴⁶ For the purposes of the Epistle, the declaration of righteousness in Gen

43 McKnight, *The Letter of James*, p. 115.

44 Note, for example, the statement by R. Yochanan on the *b.Bathra* 16a rendition of the Job introductory narrative: “Said R. Yohanan, ‘Were it not written out in a verse of Scripture, it would not be possible to say it! God looks like someone who listens to the last person who talked to him.’”

45 In some traditions Abraham actually did sacrifice Isaac (cf. *LAB* 18.5; *Mek.* 1.57; *b. Ber.* 16b).

46 Johnson, *The Letter of James: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, p. 243, who describes the tone here as a prophetic statement and its corresponding fulfilment; cf. Davids, *The Epistle of James: A Commentary on the Greek Text*, p. 192; also Hahn, “Genesis 15:6 im Neuen Testament”, 90–107 on the influence of Gen 15 in the NT.

15 becomes subordinate to what James considers its ultimate outworking in Gen 22. In naming the reward for Abraham's work, James modifies Gen 22:12 and calls Abraham a "friend of God" (φίλος θεοῦ), by which the author argues that Abraham's unique status as the righteous "friend of God" resulted only after his mature obedient work in Gen 22.⁴⁷ That Abraham's faith "was fulfilled" (ἐτελειώθη) by his "work" (ἐκ τῶν ἔργων) of offering up Isaac probably corresponds to the "perfect work" (ἔργου τέλειον) of patience required in the testing of 1:2–4, 12.⁴⁸ However, the test of the Akedah also provides the crux of the conflict given the contentious theological claim from Jas 1:13. How can the author encourage his audience to allow their trials to produce "perfect work" from their faith (1:2–4), claim that God "does not test anyone" (1:14), and then use as his proof the story of Abraham, whose perfect work resulted from God's test (Gen 22:1)?

In Jas 5:7, the audience is to be "patient" (μακροθυμία, vv. 8, 10), motivated by a knowledge that the Lord is coming as the righteous judge (vv. 8, 9, 12). In 5:11 James makes the NT's only mention of Job by name,⁴⁹ extending Job as an ὑπόδειγμα, a person to imitate.⁵⁰ The readers had heard of Job's steadfastness and seen the purpose of the Lord (5:11),⁵¹ and are now to emulate his actions. As an example of a "man who is blessed when he endures trials" from 1:12 (μακάριος ἄνθρωπος ὃς ὑπομένει πειρασμόν), Job illustrates the righteous wealthy person from 1:9–11 who learned to rejoice in his debasement with endurance (1:3).

Job's characteristic ὑπομονή in chapter 5, which the audience is to take "as an example", is shared implicitly by the traditional Abraham (e.g., *Jubilees* 19:3–8; 23:10), and together they exemplify the statement of Jas 1:11 that the one who is "patient" (ὑπομένει) will be blessed ("μακάριος"; cf. 1:11; 5:11).⁵² Both Abraham and Job therefore provide examples of men whose piety was manifested in

47 Here, cf. Jacobs, "The Midrashic Background of James 11, 21–23", 458, Eaton, *The Interpreter's Bible XII*, p. 44; Sidebottom, *The Epistle of James*, p. 45.

48 In light of the above suggestions, David Instone-Brewer, "James as a Sermon on the Trials of Abraham", has argued that James was written as a "sermon on the trials of Abraham", in which the entire epistle is structured around Abraham's various works under trial.

49 Jas 5:2 possibly contains an allusion to Job 13:28 with the phrase "moth-eaten clothes".

50 cf. Bauckham, *James: Wisdom of James, Disciple of Jesus the Sage*, pp. 56–57.

51 A statement perhaps recalling Job 42:5: "My ears have heard (ἤκουόν) of you, but now my eyes have seen (έώραξέν) you".

52 Similarly, 1 *Clement* elevates Abraham, Moses, Job and the prophets as examples of those who patiently wait on the Lord (1 *Clem* 5:5, 6; 34:8, *passim*).

their hospitality (cf. Jas 1:27; 2:2–16), proper speech (cf. Jas 1:19; 3:1–10; 5:9, 12) and intercessory prayer (cf. Jas 5:13–16) under severe testing, and who gained as a reward for their faithfulness divine blessing (Gen 22:17: אֲבְרָהָם בָּרַךְ / εὐλογῶν εὐλογήσω; Job 42:12: בָּרַךְ / εὐλόγησεν). In following their example, James' readers are to faithfully endure trials and await God's judgement (Jas 5:9) and blessing (Jas 1:12). Thus, the traditional Abraham and Job contribute a narrative coherence to the Epistle when read in light of the opening appeal for patient faith under trial.

Job and Abraham in Conflict

We can perhaps press the traditional Job and Abraham further, and ask whether the traditional juxtaposition of the two figures contributes additional nuances to James' discourse. Might the widely debated question of whether Abraham or Job were greater examples of faith have impacted James' preference? A certain ambivalence towards Abraham's story may be detected in James 1:21–24, where the author indicates that the often acclaimed righteousness of Abraham in Gen 15 was only "brought to fulfilment" when Abraham offered up Isaac near the end of his life in Gen 22. In several of the traditional readings of Abraham noted above, it was only by passing the test of Isaac that Abraham was "called a friend of God".⁵³ If we see here a certain discomfort with Abraham's imperfect endurance under trial before the Akedah, and given the author's exhortation in 5:11 to take Job as the blessed example of endurance, does the author indicate his preference for the ideal God-fearer/lover? Perhaps the author would agree with R. Yochanan's declaration in *b. Baba Bathra* 15b that Job is worthy of greater honour, as only one test was required for Job rather than the ten for Abraham.

James' and the Jobraham Cosmology of Testing

Furthermore, given the juxtaposition of the Epistle's statement of theodicy in 1:14 with its proof-text offered from Gen 22:1, perhaps the assimilated Jobraham narratives may provide clarity to James' hermeneutical and mythological/theological perspective on the test of Abraham. James proclaims bluntly that God οὐ πειράζει οὐδέτι, for "only good things come from God" (Jas 1:17). Probation is

53 Jas 2:50; note Jubilees 19:3–8; *m. Sota* 5:5; *t. Sota* 6:1.

not from God, but rather from the ἐπιθυμία (1:15), though with some role given to Satan in Jas 4:5–7 (where, notably, “friendship with the world” is notably contrasted to the “friendship with God”). At first glance a straightforward reading of Gen 22:1 would seem to imply a contradiction with James’ statement in 1:14. However, if these texts are read in light of the retold narratives of Job and Abraham, the Epistle may reveal an interpretive thought-world in which the characters of testing play carefully nuanced roles. This much is clear: for James, God’s role is to give good gifts as the Father of Lights. Satan has an adversarial/prosecutorial role found in certain retellings of Job and Abraham, in which he incites evil through a variety of circumstances. Man’s internal anthropology, here described as the ἐπιθυμία, is provided the opportunity to respond and remain faithful, despite the multi-form nature of such trials.⁵⁴ As James’ cosmology, established by the Job narrative, interacts with his reading of Gen 22, both narratives, once assimilated, provide the theological and hermeneutical freedom to justify the declaration that “πειράζει δὲ [θεός] αὐτὸς οὐδένα.”⁵⁵

James as an early Jewish interpreter subtly displays his own hermeneutic, in which the traditional Job and Abraham narratives provide the canonical response for readers of OT narratives that otherwise seem to imply that God Himself is responsible for testing and temptation.

54 Note a similar reading of James in light of the *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* by DeLuca, “Le ‘Dieu Tentateur’ Dans L’Épître des Jacques et Dans Les Homélies Pseudo-Clémentines”, 337, 344, which she compares to the Jesus saying καὶ μὴ εἰσενέγκῃς ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν. This could be read to imply that God could indeed put one to the test. DeLuca notes this as a common theme in the Church Fathers and also in 1 Cor 10:13. Cf. Davids, “The Meaning of ΑΠΕΙΡΑΣΤΟΣ in James 1.13”, 387; Martin, *James*, p. 31.

55 For a full reading of James’ cosmology and the related hermeneutics involved with Abraham and Job, see my monograph Nicholas J. Ellis, *The Hermeneutics of Divine Testing: Cosmic Trial and Biblical Interpretation in the Epistle of James and Other Jewish Literature* (WUNT 11. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2014).

Jesus and the Jewish Diviner: The Use and Misuse of 4Q242

Beniamin Pascut

Since their discovery in 1947, the Dead Sea Scrolls have changed the dynamics of the study of early Christianity, and the great amount of ink that has been spilled for their examination represents a strong testimony to their importance.¹ Impressive parallels between the canonical gospels and the Scrolls have been proposed throughout the years, and while some stood the test of time, other parallels have been universally rejected.² This is what scholarship is all about—sharing, expending, evaluating and accepting or rejecting ideas. It is a cumulative process, a testing and refinement of theories that others have offered for discussion and consideration. Whether good or bad, exceptional or obscure, most theories that make it to print are subjected to serious review, which either affirms their integrity or calls into question their objective foundation. Some theories remain unnoticed, and those that infiltrate rapidly in hundreds of footnotes do so either because they are too important not to be passed on or too controversial to be left unsolved. There are also those theories that receive wide and favorable acceptance across the scholarly spectrum without serious evaluation. These are the most troublesome of all, for their uncritical acceptance often leads to misconception and misuse.

It is the purpose of this essay to contribute to the reassessment of a theory that has been accepted for far too long without a thorough investigation. For over six decades, the Prayer of Nabonidus of the Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q242/4QPrNab ar) has been increasingly recognized as an important parallel to the miracle story of the healing of the paralytic in Mark 2:1–12 (also Matt 9:1–8, Luke 5:17–26). Jesus' claim to forgive the sins of the paralytic has

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- 1 R. Horsley, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Historical Jesus," in *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: The Second Princeton Symposium on Judaism and Christian Origins*, ed. J. Charlesworth (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2006), 37–60; C. Evans, "The New Quest for Jesus and the New Research on the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *Jesus, Mark and Q. The Teaching of Jesus and its Earliest Records*, ed. M. Labahn and A. Schmidt (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 163–183.
 - 2 See the section entitled, "Beyond Sensationalism and Conspiracy" in C. Elledge, *The Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls: Archaeology and Biblical Studies* (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 115–123; and P. Flint, "Jesus and the Dead Sea Scrolls," in *The Historical Jesus in Context*, ed. Amy-Jill Levine, D. Allison and J. Crossan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 110–131.

been paralleled with the role of the unnamed Jewish man of 4Q242, who is believed to have forgiven the sins of the Babylonian king, Nabonidus. Four years after its publication, Dupont-Sommer was the first to make the confident claim that 4Q242 is a perfect parallel to Mark 2:1–12,³ and thirteen years later, Vermès expressed the same confidence when he said:

This fragment which has so luckily survived is particularly valuable in that it sheds fresh light on the controversial Gospel episode of the healing of the paralytic. Considered side by side with the Nabonidus story, there is nothing outstandingly novel or unique in the words of Jesus, ‘My son, your sins are forgiven.’⁴

Many New Testament scholars have accepted this conclusion with much enthusiasm. In an effort to root Jesus in Judaism, a vast number of expositions on Mark 2:1–12 and its corresponding pericopes continue to appeal to 4Q242 with little or no interaction with its various reconstructions and with the assumption that, far from being radically unique, Jesus’ claim to forgive sins finds close affinity to 4Q242.⁵ In light of such assumption, and given that no detailed study has been written to explore the relationship between 4Q242 and Mark 2:1–12, the essay at hand seeks to revisit this supposed parallel. Two questions will be considered in two major sections: Who is the agent of forgiveness in 4Q242, and what is the extent of the correspondence between 4Q242 and Mark 2:1–12?

3 A. Dupont-Sommer, “Exorcismes et guérisons dans les écrits de Qumran,” in *Congress Volume* (VTSup 7; Leiden: Brill, 1960), 246–261.

4 G. Vermès, *Jesus the Jew: A Historian’s Reading of the Gospels* (London: Collins, 1973), 68.

5 For example, see J.G. Crossley, *The Date of Mark’s Gospel: Insight from the Law in Earliest Christianity* (JSNTS 266; London: T & T Clark, 2004), 96–97; M. Harding, *Early Christian Life and Thought in Social Context: A Reader* (New York: T & T Clark, 2003), 188; J.C. O’Neill, *Who Did Jesus Think He Was?* (BIS 11; Leiden: Brill, 1995), 130; G. Theissen and A. Merz, *The Historical Jesus: A Comprehensive Guide* (London: SCM, 1998), 527; J.H. Charlesworth, *Jesus’ Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus Within Early Judaism* (New York: Crossroad, 1996), 117; R. Gundry, *Mark: A Commentary on his Apology for the Cross* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1993), 116; J. Dunn, *The Partings of the Ways Between Christianity and Judaism and their Significance for the Character of Christianity* (London: SCM, 1991), 60–61; J. Marcus, *Mark 1–8: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 27; New York: Doubleday, 2000), 217.

1 The Agent of Forgiveness in 4Q242

As a preliminary step, it is important to make a few remarks about the nature of this fragmentary Aramaic text. Copied between 75–50 BC,⁶ it has survived in four fragments, three of them (Fragment 1, Fragment 2a, 2b and Fragment 3) belonging to the first column of eight lines and the fourth belonging to a separate column of five short lines. If one excludes the fourth fragment, whose preserved lines are too short and fragmentary,⁷ 4Q242 contains fifty-six words, some of which are only partially preserved.⁸

מלי צ[ל]תא די צלי נבני מלך [בב]ל מלכ[א רבא כדי כתיש הוא]	1
בשחנא באישא בפתגם א[לה]א בתימן[אנה נבני בשחנא באישא]	2
כתיש הוית שנין שבע ומן [די] שוי א[להא עלי אנפוהי ואסא לי]	3
וחטאי שבק לה גזר והוא יהודי מ[ן בני גלותא על לי ואמר]	4
החוי וכתב למעבד יקר ור[בו] לשם א[להא עליא וכן כתבת אנה]	5
כתיש הוית בשחנא ב[אישא] בתימן [בפתגם אלהא עליא]	6
שנין שבע מצלא הוי[ת קדם] אלהי כספא ודהבא [נחשא פרולא]	7
אעא אבנא חספא מן די [הוית סב]ר די אלהין ה[מון]—	8

In spite of various reconstructions of the lacunae, the general content of 4Q242 is quite clear. While in Teman, Nabonidus was stricken for seven years with a disease inflicted on him by God (lines 1–3). After being forgiven of his sin, the inscription explains that a Jewish man of the exilic community instructed Nabonidus to give honor and praise to the Most High God (lines 4–5), and as a result, the king recounted his idolatrous past (lines 6–8). The act of forgiveness in line 4, however, has been subject to serious debate. Four opposing reconstructions and interpretative positions have been proposed.

6 See A.E. Steinmann, “The Chicken and the Egg: A New Proposal for the Relationship between the *Prayer of Nabonidus* and the *Book of Daniel*,” *RdQ* 20/4 (2002), 557–570 (576). For the facsimile showing the placement of the fragments, see F.M. Cross, “Fragments of the Prayer of Nabonidus,” *IEJ* 34 (1984), 261.

7 Collins confirms this when he says, “The five fragmentary lines of frg. 4 are highly ambiguous, and several commentators, including Cross and García Martínez, withheld comment on them. Grelot comments that ‘il ne fournit que des débris de phrases ou de mots’ (Grelot, ‘Nouvel Essai’, 493). The leather is distorted so that the lines appear curved and cramped.” J.J. Collins, “4QPrayer of Nabonidus,” in *Qumran Cave 4* (DJD 22; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996), 92.

8 Steinmann, 567.

1.1 *Not A Reference To Forgiveness*

The view proposed by Milik, who first published these fragments, takes גזר as the object of שבק and supplies a verb in the lacuna to govern חטאי, translating the end of line 3 and line 4 as follows: (line 3) ... “[Mais, quand j’eus confessé mes péchés]; (line 4) et mes fautes, (Dieu) m’accorda un devin [...]”.⁹ Milik has received criticism for this interpretation because: 1) his reading presupposes לי instead of לה, and 2) he assumes that the verb שבק carries the meaning “to grant.” First, a closer look at the facsimile dismisses the possibility that ל is followed by a first person suffix since the head of *yod* throughout the prayer is relatively small. Second, even though שבק is used elsewhere in the Scrolls with the sense “to grant” (1Q20 22:20), its close association with the noun חטא in 4Q242 indicates that the verb should be rendered “to forgive.” The juxtaposition of שבק and חטא appears elsewhere in the Scrolls as in 11Q10 38:2–3 // Job 42:9–10, where God brings forgiveness at Job’s request.¹⁰ Therefore, Milik’s interpretation has little textual support and is based on a textual emendation.

1.2 *Forgiveness Offered by the Most High*

Another way to interpret line 4 is to take לה שבק וחטאי as a separate sentence from גזר, placing the stop after לה, and treating it as a pronominal object that refers back to the noun חטא. In this interpretation, line 4 depends heavily on the reconstruction of line 3 and has God as subject, “and my sin, he [the Most High] forgave it. A diviner, a Jew [...]”. First proposed by Grelot,¹¹ this interpretation gained favor among interpreters such as Cross,¹² Collins,¹³

9 “[But, when I confessed my sins] and my transgressions, (God) gave *me* a diviner.” See J.T. Milik, “Prière de Nabonide’ et autres écrits d’un cycle de Daniel: Fragments araméens de Qumrân 4,” *RB* 63 (1956), 407–415.

10 They also appear together in 4Q547 6:3, but the text is too fragmentary to be of any significance. Of particular importance is 11Q10 38:2–3, where שבק is followed by the preposition ל plus the 3rd plural suffix, “and [God] forgave them their sins” (ושבק להון) (חטאיהון).

11 He translates line 4 as follows, “Et mon pêche, il le remit. Un devin-et celui-ci.” See P. Grelot, “La Priere de Nabonide (4Q Or Nab): Nouvel Essai de restauration,” *RQ* 9 (1978), 483–495.

12 In the case of Cross, he is undecided whether to understand the expression וחטאי שבק לה as a *casus pendens* followed by a peal perfect verb, “As for my sin, he (the Most High) forgave it,” or as a passive participle followed by ל, “and my sin he forgave.” He finds it difficult to choose between the two because, “both the passive participle and the peal passive are in rare instances written defectively even in Massoretic Hebrew.” See Cross, 260–264.

13 Collins, “4QPrayer of Nabonidus,” 83–93.

Puech,¹⁴ Flint,¹⁵ Wise,¹⁶ and Steinmann.¹⁷ In spite of its popularity, this position is not without problems. Taking God as the subject of the verb depends heavily on the reconstruction of the lacuna of line 3, and the reconstruction of lines such as this depends on the tentative and speculative textual restoration of lost parts of words. In other words, a connection between line 3 and 4 is possible, but not required, and whether the end of line 3 makes reference to the Most High is questionable.

A similar view, which takes God as the subject of שבק, is proposed by van der Woude who ends the first sentence of line 4 after the verb שבק, and understands לה גזר to be a nominal sentence in which לה refers to the Most High in the previous line, while the noun גזר refers to a prophet: “und Er verzieh meine Sunden. Er hatte einen Weissager, einen jüdischen Mann von den Verbannten.”¹⁸ The difficulty of this reading, as shown by Grelot and Collins, is twofold: 1) taking לה with גזר to mean “he had a prophet” is extremely odd, and 2) it is impossible to start a sentence with a complement followed by the subject, but without using the verb הוה.¹⁹

1.3 *Forgiveness Offered by the גזר*

Line 4 (והטאי שבק לה גזר והוא יהודי) has also been understood to represent two sentences, defined by the two ו that precede both the noun חטא and the pronoun הוה. Dupont-Sommer, the first proponent of this position, followed by Vermès and García Martínez, insists that גזר is the subject of the verb שבק, while לה is a *dativus ethicus* with an expletive function. As a result, the sentence reads,

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- 14 Puech renders the line, “Et mon péché Il le pardonna. Un devin et c’était un juif.” See E. Puech, “La Prière de Nabonide (4Q242),” in *Targumic and Cognate Studies. Essays in Honor of Martin McNamara*, ed. K. Cathcart and M. Maher (JSOTSup 230; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 208–227.
 - 15 P. Flint, “The Daniel Tradition at Qumran,” in *The Book of Daniel: Composition and Reception*, ed. J.J. Collins and P. Flint (Leiden: Brill, 2001), 329–336.
 - 16 M. Wise, *The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 265.
 - 17 Steinmann translates line 4 as follows, “And my sin was forgiven by him. A diviner, a Jew.” Steinmann, 559.
 - 18 “And He forgave my sins. He had a prophet, a Jew of the exile.” A. Van der Woude, “Bermerkungen zum Gebet des Nabonid,” in *Qumrân. Sa piété, sa théologie et son milieu*, ed. M. Delcor (Paris: Gembloux, 1978), 120–129; also B. Blackburn, *Theios Anēr and the Markan Miracle Traditions* (WUNT 11/40; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1991), 139.
 - 19 Grelot makes a similar remark, “Si tentante que soit l’hypothèse pour la logique de récit, il me paraît difficile qu’une telle proposition nominale ait commencé par le complément d’attribution *lh* suivi du seul sujet, sans le verbe *h^awa*.” Grelot, 489 and Collins, “4QPrayer of Nabonidus,” 90.

“and as exorcist pardoned my sin. He was a Jewish [man.]”²⁰ As far as the syntax is concerned, this interpretation is attractive because the word order seems to favor the conclusion that גֹּזֵר is the subject of שָׁבַק. However, this theory is not without difficulties either.

The principal problem lies in the inconsistency between line 3 and line 4. Both Dupont-Sommer and García Martínez who insist that the גֹּזֵר forgave Nabonidus (line 4), reconstruct line 3 as follows: “[I] was banished far from [men until I prayed to God the All-Highest].”²¹ This reconstruction is questionable and highly inconsistent. If the king had access to and addressed God directly in prayer, then the forgiveness of the גֹּזֵר would have been unnecessary. This very reconstruction of line 3 supports the view that Nabonidus appealed for God’s healing and forgiveness.

The second objection relates to García Martínez’s argument that “the figure and the action of the גֹּזֵר remain deprived of all significance,” if the גֹּזֵר is not the subject of the verb.²² This is based, he suggests, on the fact that in Daniel those identified with the subject גֹּזֵר are fortune-tellers and magicians (Dan 2:27; 4:4). This argument, which lays at the foundation of this interpretation, lacks weight because the significance of the גֹּזֵר does not depend on whether he is the subject of the verb שָׁבַק. In fact, there are two textual indications available to confirm the premise that the גֹּזֵר is full of significance even without the authority to forgive.

First, it is important to observe that in line 4, the גֹּזֵר is identified as “a Jew of the exiles” (יהודי מן בני גלותא). Considering the polemical character of 4Q242 against idolatry (lines 7–8), it is reasonable to infer that the mention of the nationality of the גֹּזֵר is for the purpose of highlighting his pro-monotheistic apologetic stance. This is certainly the case with the account described in Daniel 3 when Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, also referred to as “the Jews” (יהודאין), are condemned by Nebuchadnezzar for disobeying the royal decree

20 A. Dupont-Sommer, “Remarques linguistiques sur un fragment araméen de Qoumran (Prière de Nabonide),” *GLECS* 8 (1958–1960), 48–56; Vermès, 68; F. García Martínez, “The Prayer of Nabonidus: A New Synthesis,” in *Qumran and Apocalyptic: Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran* (STDJ 9; Leiden: Brill, 1992), 116–136; J.C. VanderKam, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Today* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 177; G.H. Twelftree, *Jesus the Exorcist: A Contribution to the Study of the Historical Jesus* (WUNT 11/54; Tübingen: Mohr-Siebeck, 1993), 17–18.

21 Dupont-Sommer offers a similar translation of line 3: “[of the sons of men (?). But I prayed to the Most High God.” A. Dupont-Sommer, *The Essene Writings from Qumran* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1961), 322; García Martínez, 120.

22 García Martínez, 125.

which demanded worship of the Babylonia gods (Dan 3:12). This narrative picturing how Jews of the exiles chose to remain God's faithful witnesses in a foreign land allows 4Q242 to be seen from the standpoint of Jewish religious apologetic in contact with pagan polytheism. In light of this parallel, the expression "a Jew of the exiles" is not without significance. It highlights the role of the גִּזְר as a light to the Gentiles who directed the Babylonian king away from idols to the God of Israel (Isa 42:6).²³

Second, in line 5, the גִּזְר charges the king to give honor to God in a written declaration.²⁴ The language here, "to declare and write" (כְּתַב and חוּה) is reminiscent of Dan 4:1–2, where Nebuchadnezzar writes a royal proclamation of praise in which he expresses gratitude to God for delivering him from his insanity:

King Nebuchadnezzar to all peoples, nations, and languages, that dwell in all the earth: Peace be multiplied to you! It has seemed good to me *to declare* (חוּה) the signs and wonders that the Most High God has done for me.

Under the guidance of the גִּזְר, king Nabonidus is moved to make a similar confession of praise, "Write a declaration to give honor and exalt[ation] to the name of G[od Most High. So I wrote as follows:]" (line 5). This is not a minor task, particularly as it involves persuading an idolatrous pagan king to pray to Israel's God. Accordingly, the argument adduced to suggest that the גִּזְר must have been the agent of forgiveness is by all means mistaken. In fact, the significance of the גִּזְר is so great that if it hadn't been for him, the Prayer of Nabonidus would have never been written.

1.4 *Forgiveness Mediated Through the גִּזְר*

Another view, championed by Fitzmyer, takes גִּזְר as the subject of the verb שָׁבַק, and לֵה as a reference to God, "and an exorcist remitted my sins for Him."²⁵ On this reading, the implication of 4Q24 for the gospel episode in

23 Cf. Dan 6:26; 2 Kgs 5:3–15; 2 Chr 33:11–13; Josephus, *Ant.* 9:18–20.

24 Contrary to Collins, it is not necessary to assume that the imperatives חוּה and כְּתַב in line 5 represent a condition for the cure of Nabonidus. On the contrary, giving honor to God implies that the cure already happened. This is also the case in Dan 4:1–2, where Nebuchadnezzar published his decree to express his gratitude to God for delivering him from his madness (cf. 2 *Macc.* 3:31–35). Collins, "4QPrayer of Nabonidus," 91.

25 J. Fitzmyer, "The Aramaic Language and the Study of the New Testament," *JBL* 99/1 (1980), 5–21 (16). For Fitzmyer's restoration of the Aramaic text, see J. Fitzmyer and D.J. Har-

Mk 2 is colossal because it “provides extrabiblical Palestinian attestation of a belief that a human being could be the instrument of God’s forgiveness of sin; that forgiveness could be mediated through a human agent.”²⁶ According to Fitzmyer, this interpretation of line 4 finds support in 11Q10 38:2–3 (Job 42:10) where a similar function is attributed to Job. Using the construction שבק plus חטא, 11Q10 38:2–3 records that God forgave Job’s friends on account of his prayer, “And G[o]d listened to the voice of Job *and forgave them their sins because of him* (בדילהן חטאיהון בשבקה).” In reality, however, other than the language of forgiveness, there are no obvious similarities between the two accounts, and Job’s role in the forgiveness of his friends does not appear to parallel that of the Jewish diviner. Unlike 11Q10 38:2–3 where Job prays for his friends, there is no mention of the גור praying for or interceding on behalf of Nabonidus in 4Q242. In fact, it is quite evident that 4Q242 is a text concerned with the prayer of Nabonidus, and not with the prayer of the גור, which suggests that his supposed intercessory prayer for forgiveness was unnecessary.²⁷

1.5 Conclusion

All views surveyed herein depend heavily on the way each interpreter understands the syntax and vocabulary of lines 3 and 4. Given their syntactical complexity and the plurality of possible interpretations, the act of forgiveness is difficult to decipher using these two lines alone. A way forward is to turn the attention to line 5, where the גור himself speaks. Here, the גור does not utter a pronouncement of forgiveness (e.g. 2Sam 12:13), nor does he justify his supposed role in healing and forgiving the king, which would have been expected from someone acting in the place of God.²⁸ Instead, he directs the king to give honor and exaltation to God. The remaining fragments do not contain an explicit statement explaining the reasons for this demand, but the prayer as a whole suggests a transition of the king from worshiping the man-made gods, who were incapable of healing his condition, to worshiping God. When read in context, line 5 demands the conclusion that forgiveness and healing came from

rington, *A Manual of Palestinian Aramaic Texts* (BibOr 34; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1978), 2–3.

26 Fitzmyer, “The Aramaic Language,” 16.

27 Puech similarly concludes that the Targums of Job are irrelevant for 4Q242, “Pour comprendre le passage, ne devrait-on pas s’inspirer du targum de Job 42:9.” Puech, 217; J.J. Collins, “Nabonidus, Prayer Of,” in *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1996), 4:977.

28 Take for example *Exodus Rabbah* 34:2, where the belief that the angel of Exod 23:21 has the authority to forgive is countered with the monotheistic theology of Mic 7:18.

the Most High and not from the גור. The role of the גור was to point Nabonidus away from the worthless idols to the God of Israel who alone had the power and authority to solve the fundamental problem of the king. The inevitable conclusion, one that overturns the claims advanced by Dupont-Sommer and Vermès, is that Nabonidus received forgiveness from God.

One central issue remains to be clarified: What do 4Q242 and Mark 2:1–12 have in common? The following section will highlight two features shared by these texts at a moderate level. Both texts appear to display 1) a general connection between sin and sickness, forgiveness and healing, and 2) a worldview grounded in Jewish monotheism.

2 The Correspondence Between 4Q242 and Mark 2:1–12

2.1 *Sin & Sickness, Forgiveness & Healing*

When set side by side, 4Q242 and Mark 2:1–12 display a link between sin and sickness, forgiveness and healing. While a cause-effect relationship between sin and sickness is not clearly stated in the surviving fragments of 4Q242, a connection is still assumed due to the fact that the king's skin disease is fixed by the decree of God (line 2). It may be argued, with much plausibility, that the Babylonian king sought mercy from his pagan gods, begging for the restitution of his health (lines 7–8), and upon meeting the Jewish apologist (line 4), he learned that he displeased the Most High God who brought punishment upon him in the form of a disease (line 2). It is reasonable to infer that in cases like this, when sickness is a direct result of sin, the relationship between forgiveness and healing are deeply interwoven to the extent that the line between them is blurred.²⁹ The two become almost identical because healing cannot be granted without forgiveness, and thus to ask for healing is to ask for forgiveness.

In Mark 2:1–12, their relationship is slightly more complex. On the one hand, considering that Jesus forgave a paralytic in need of healing (2:2–5), it is possible to suggest that the paralysis was a direct result of sin, and in order to heal, Jesus needed to forgive.³⁰ On the other hand, however, the act of

29 For the relationship between sin and sickness, forgiveness and healing, see Ps 32:3–5; 41:4; 107:17; *T. Reu.* 1:7–8; *T. Gad* 5:9–11; *T. Levi* 6:7; *T. Zeb.* 5:2–4; *Let. Aris.* 233; Josephus, *Ant.* 1:208, 9:18–20; *CD* 8:4 and Ps 103:3; *Pr. Man.* 16; 4Q427 f7 ii 6.

30 This is well illustrated in *b. Ned.* 41a, “A sick man does not recover from his sickness until all his sins are forgiven him,” and in *b. Meg.* 17b, “Redemption and healing come after forgiveness.” For the relationship between sin and paralysis, see 3 *Macc.* 2:21–22 (cf. *LXX Jer* 27:15).

forgiveness did not automatically produce healing. The paralytic did not stand up and walk before the bystanders when Jesus said, “Son, your sins are forgiven” (2:5). That was only possible after Jesus’ second command, “I say to you, rise, pick up your bed, and go home” (2:11). It appears, then, that there are two stages in the Markan episode—one involves forgiveness (2:5), and the other healing (2:11)—and the rhetorical question in verse 9 (“which is easier to say to the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Stand up, take your bed, and walk?’”) further strengthens their distinction. An obvious implication is that forgiveness and healing are not identical in this gospel story. In fact, their relationship is gradually clarified as Mark’s narrative continues. The *ὅτι* clause, “So that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins” (2:10), strongly suggests that Jesus’ word of healing (2:11) demonstrates his success in forgiving the paralytic (2:5). In other words, unlike 4Q242 where forgiveness and healing have a cause-effect relationship and are almost synonymous, in Mark, one serves to validate the other.

2.2 *Forgiveness and Jewish Monotheism*

The two texts also exhibit a shared monotheistic worldview grounded in the belief that forgiving sins is a divine privilege. This seems to be the principal issue operating at the foreground of 4Q242. The sickened king entreats his man-made gods, “for seven years I continued praying [to] the gods (lines 7–8a),” only to find disappointment. Pleading for their divine intervention for seven years was all in vain. They could not heal nor forgive him—after all, they were made out of silver and gold, wood, stone and clay (lines 7–8). But he eventually finds healing and forgiveness from the Most High God after being introduced to the Jewish monotheistic faith. Motivated by his freedom from disease and compelled by his theological protégé, he declares the superiority of Israel’s God in a written proclamation (line 5) in which he exposes the worthlessness of his former gods in the eyes of the world. This polemic against idolatry, alongside the king’s conversion to Jewish monotheism (line 8b), suggests that perhaps Ps 103:3 and Mic 7:18 stand in the background of 4Q242.

The gospel episode reflects a concern for Jewish monotheism as well. The objection of the scribes, “He is blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but the one God?” (Mk 2:7), echoes a well-known Jewish propaganda for monotheism based on Israel’s experience with the one God who forgives.³¹ Such worldview

31 J. Marcus, “Authority to Forgive Sins upon the Earth: The *Shema* in the Gospel of Mark,” in *The Gospels and the Scriptures of Israel*, ed. C. Evans and W. Stegner (SSEJC 3; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 196–211; and K.H. Tan, “The Shema and Early Christianity,” *TynB* 59/2 (2008), 181–206 (201).

comes to full expression in Mic 7:18, where the question, “Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression?” expects the answer, “No one, but you God!” In the same way, the Psalmist says, “But with you there is forgiveness,” (Ps 130:4)—meaning, forgiveness is found with no one else, but with God (cf. Ps 103:3; Isa 43:25; 4Q504 1 ii 7–12; 11Q5 24:3–16; LAB 12:9–10, etc.). Against this background, the scribes have a good theological reason to disregard and criticize Jesus’ word of forgiveness (Mk 2:5). It is blasphemous to claim the kind of authority that belongs to God alone. Therefore, it seems that the scribes retain to some extent the function of the $\eta\eta$ in 4Q242. By categorizing Jesus’ statement as a blasphemy and pointing to the unique authority of God, they promote the exclusivity of Jewish monotheism reflected in 4Q242.

But this perspective, of course, does not match with that of Jesus and of the Markan narrator. As the story advances, the gospel episode diverges radically from 4Q242. Hofius has rightly argued that what characterizes God in the scribes’ objection, namely that he alone can forgive sins, also characterizes Jesus. There is a shift in the narrative from the rhetorical question “who can forgive sins, but the one God” ($\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma \delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\phi\acute{\iota}\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma \epsilon\acute{\iota} \mu\eta \epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \acute{\omicron} \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$; in 2:7) to Jesus saying that he is the Son of Man who has authority to forgive sins ($\acute{\epsilon}\xi\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha\nu \acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota \acute{\omicron} \upsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\upsilon \acute{\alpha}\phi\acute{\iota}\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ in 2:10).³² On a narrative level, verse 10 constitutes an answer to the question asked in verse 7. The verses stand in a parallel relationship: the verbal clause $\acute{\alpha}\phi\acute{\iota}\epsilon\nu\alpha\iota \acute{\alpha}\mu\alpha\rho\tau\acute{\iota}\alpha\varsigma$ is identical; the verb $\delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\mu\alpha\iota$ corresponds to $\acute{\epsilon}\xi\upsilon\sigma\iota\alpha\nu \acute{\epsilon}\chi\epsilon\iota$, and $\epsilon\acute{\iota}\varsigma \acute{\omicron} \theta\epsilon\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ stands in parallel to $\acute{\omicron} \upsilon\acute{\iota}\delta\varsigma \tau\omicron\upsilon \acute{\alpha}\nu\theta\rho\acute{\omega}\pi\omicron\upsilon$. The question “who can ...?” ($\tau\acute{\iota}\varsigma \delta\acute{\upsilon}\nu\alpha\tau\alpha\iota$) receives a shocking answer—there is someone other than God that can (or has authority to) forgive sins. The qualifier $\acute{\epsilon}\pi\acute{\iota} \tau\eta\varsigma \gamma\eta\varsigma$ serves to underscore that what is normally available *in heaven* from God (2 Chr 6:21, 25, 27, 30, 39; 1 Kgs 8:30, 34, 36, 39; Mk 11:25) is now accessible *on earth* from Jesus.

There is yet another significant difference between 4Q242 and Mark 2:1–12. While in 4Q242, the $\eta\eta$ directs Nabonidus to the God of Israel (line 5), in the gospel episode, Jesus draws attention to himself and his own authority. He both claims and demonstrates that he is the paralytic’s source of forgiveness and healing. This can be noticed when considering the emphasis throughout this pericope on the performative power of Jesus’ words. Two observations are noteworthy in this regard.

First, the charge of blasphemy against Jesus’ word of forgiveness (Mk 2:7) is best understood as a response toward a claim to forgive in the place of God and not toward a priestly declaration of forgiveness. The views adopted by Dunn

32 O. Hofius, “Jesu Zuspruch der Sündenvergebung. Exegetische Erwägungen zu Mk 2,5b,” in *Neutestamentliche Studien* (WUNT 132; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000), 38–56 (42).

and Sanders, namely that Jesus committed blasphemy by usurping the priestly role of announcing forgiveness³³ or by pronouncing forgiveness in the absence of confession³⁴ do not stand scrutiny. Both theories miss the scribes' allusion to the *Shema* (εἷς ὁ θεός) whose effect here, like elsewhere in Jewish literature, is to highlight God's uniqueness—to put God in a class of his own, as alone forgiver.³⁵ This monotheistic topos only makes sense if the scribes understood Jesus' word of forgiveness as a performative attempt to forgive and as a claim of equality with God. Saying, "your sins are forgiven" (2:5), was equivalent to a claim of divinity, and not simply an announcement of God's forgiveness.

Second, the use of the verbs λέγω and λαλέω throughout the pericope places emphasis on what Jesus can perform through his very words:

Speech Act I Jesus → paralytic	2:5 λέγει τῷ παραλυτικῷ ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι
Objection	2:7 τί οὗτος οὕτως λαλεῖ; βλασφημεῖ
Felicity condition Scribes → Jesus	τίς δύναται ἀφιέναι ἁμαρτίας εἰ μὴ εἷς ὁ θεός;
Speech Act I & Speech Act II Compared Jesus → Scribes	2:9 τί ἐστὶν εὐκοπώτερον, εἰπεῖν τῷ παραλυτικῷ ἀφίενταί σου αἱ ἁμαρτίαι, ἢ εἰπεῖν ἔγειρε καὶ ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ περιπάτει
Speech Act II Jesus → paralytic	2:11 σοὶ λέγω ἔγειρε ἄρον τὸν κράβαττόν σου καὶ ὑπάγε
Result of Speech Act II & Validation of Speech Act I	2:12 ἠγέρθη καὶ εὐθὺς ἄρας τὸν κράβαττον ἐξῆλθεν

33 Dunn, 60–61.

34 E.P. Sanders, *Jewish Law from Jesus to the Mishnah: Five Studies* (London: SCM, 1990), 61–63.

35 For the use of εἷς (ὁ) θεός, see *Sib. Or.* 3:11–20; *Philo, Leg.* 3:82, *Spec.* 1:331–332, *Decal.* 61–65, *Legat.* 114–115, 367–368; Josephus, *Ant.* 8:335–343; *Pseudo-Phocylides* 53–54.

Speech Act I (2:5) receives an objection from the scribes (2:6–7), and in response, Jesus compares the difficulty between performing Speech Act I and performing Speech Act II (2:9). Subsequently, in order to show the validity of the performative speech that cannot be empirically verified (Speech Act I), Jesus performs a speech that can be judged in terms of its visible success (Speech Act II). Ultimately, then, his successful healing (2:12) is both a visible demonstration of the performative power of Speech Act II, and a validation of the performative power of Speech Act I.

In light of these observations, the possibility of a strong conceptual parallelism between 4Q242 and Mk 2:1–12 is dropped altogether. Mark's Jesus, like God and unlike the *גזר* of 4Q242, has the power and authority to heal and forgive. The doxological response at the end of Mark's episode when the crowds glorify God saying, "We never saw anything like this!" (2:12), does not contradict this conclusion. Rather, it represents a Christological ending meant to counter the previous objection of the scribes that Jesus' claim to forgive counts as a blasphemy against the one God (2:7). As God receives glory for the forgiveness and healing produced by Jesus, the narrative seeks to capture a unity between the character of God and that of Jesus. Jesus' authority to forgive does not question the oneness of God (2:7) for Jesus himself is included in the divine identity of the one God (2:10).

3 Conclusion

The current study found that 4Q242 and Mark 2:1–12 are rooted in a similar worldview, which includes a link between forgiveness and healing, and a belief in the uniqueness and oneness of God. Nevertheless, contrary to scholarly perception, this study did not find a significant parallel between 4Q242 and Mark 2:1–12. Whereas in the Qumran text healing and forgiveness are near synonyms, in the gospel episode one serves to validate the other. Most importantly, while in 4Q242 healing and forgiveness can only come from God, in Mark, Jesus shares this divine authority with the one God and is included in the divine identity. It is difficult, then, to join the chorus of scholars who followed Vermès in affirming that 4Q242 "sheds fresh light on the controversial Gospel episode of the healing of the paralytic;"³⁶ on the contrary, 4Q242 is of little significance and should no longer be a desideratum in future expositions of Mark 2:1–12.

36 Vermès, 68.

PART 3

New Testament



Scripture and God's Authority: Case Studies and Further Questions

N.T. Wright

This paper focuses on what I suppose is the most contested and problematic moment in 'reception history', namely the moment when those first-century Jews who believed that Jesus of Nazareth was Israel's Messiah and the world's Lord began to re-read their scriptures with this belief as the controlling filter. We can see this process going on at various points in the early Christian writings, and it provides endless happy hours for those who like pondering shifts of meaning and new ways of reading old texts.

My title—Scripture and God's Authority—reflects the book which I published in 2005 and which has recently reappeared in a new edition.¹ What I want to do in this paper is to summarize the basic argument of the book, highlighting in particular this question of the history of how the text is read; and then to look at the two quite long Case Studies which appear in the new edition, the first on Sabbath and the second on Monogamy, which I believe shed quite a bit of fascinating light on the central theme. This, indeed, was why the publisher asked for them, to give some more body to the main argument.

1 Scripture and God's Authority

The title of the book, and of this paper, reflects a puzzle which became clearer to me in the early years of the century as I was involved in many discussions within the Anglican Communion on the one hand, and in dialogue with Roman Catholic theologians on the other, in which reference to scripture and its authority was ubiquitous but frequently opaque. That is, everybody says that scripture is authoritative, but few stop to explain what that means in practice. My book gets off to its start by pointing out that in scripture itself it is God who is authoritative. This may be obvious but when you chase through the ramifications it becomes less so. The Christian tradition has assumed, of course,

¹ *Scripture and the Authority of God* (London and San Francisco: SPCK and HarperOne, 2010 [2005]). In the USA the first edition of this book was entitled *The Last Word: Scripture and the Authority of God—Getting Beyond the Bible Wars*.

that what scripture says God says, but even those who were most concerned to make this point—specifically the Protestant reformers—were often, from our perspective, somewhat cavalier in how they applied this. Some reformers were eager to draw on Old Testament narratives and prophecies in order to instruct the princes of their day—I think of Latimer preaching before Edward VI—while others, notably Martin Luther, could say such things as ‘Moses knows nothing of Christ’. What’s more, the idea of the authority of scripture was used as a limiting statute in the sixteenth century (i.e. one should only insist on that which could be plainly shown from scripture, and not insist, on pain of damnation, upon dogmas that did not have scriptural warrant); but in more recent western church life the phrase ‘authority of scripture’ has been used in a maximal sense, especially of course within fundamentalism. And yet the underlying problems of a *Christian* ‘authoritative’ reading of scripture have not gone away, but only been parked.

My basic thesis, as is clear from the title of the book and this paper, is that what we really mean in the shorthand phrase ‘the authority of scripture’ is the authority of *God*, somehow mediated through scripture; and that when we reflect on this fuller concept we discover that it works somewhat differently from how the shorthand version has been taken to work. Some might suppose from this that I intend a kind of looser relation, an appeal as it were over the head of scripture to God himself, but that rather shallow possibility is not what I have in mind. Things are more complex. What I envisage is an attempt to understand from scripture itself who God is and what God is up to, and to see how scripture itself serves that purpose and vision.

In particular, I have proposed that scripture should be understood not merely, as in some rationalist formulations, as the provider of true information about God and God’s purposes, but rather as itself part of the means by which those purposes are advanced. That is, God’s purposes are advanced through human beings who seek to do his will and so contribute to his ongoing work, but those human beings are themselves informed and energised by scripture. To understand this we need, and of course scripture itself supplies, some kind of doctrine of God’s working within humans, whether through his word, his wisdom, his spirit or whatever. All this is basic.

Basic, too, is the point that when we read scripture in the Christian way, focussed on Jesus and his kingdom-bringing work, death and resurrection, we discover that the purpose of God is not simply to convey true ideas to people’s minds so that, by believing them, they may qualify for an otherworldly salvation. This is where my work on scripture hooks up with my work on eschatology; we need, I am suggesting, to integrate our vision of what God wishes to accomplish through scripture with our vision of the eventual goal of

new heavens and new earth, rather than with a detached and overspiritualized eschatology of merely 'going to heaven'.² In other words, if God is at work through scripture, it makes sense to ask how scripture, and the reading and praying of scripture by the people of God, contributes materially—and I mean materially!—to their work within the purposes of God for which the New Testament, Paul as well as the gospels, uses 'the kingdom of God' as a dense shorthand. How does the reading and praying of scripture turn people into kingdom-building people?

Here we encounter—I am still summarizing, very briefly, the larger thesis of this book—the problem of the two testaments, to which frequent allusion has already been made in these essays. There was a very interesting exchange in the *Times Literary Supplement* in the summer of 2011. First there was a review by David Martin, the sociologist, of the recent book by the atheist philosopher A.C. Grayling, entitled *The Good Book*. Grayling, as is widely known, has produced what he considers to be an atheist's Bible. It is a collection of maxims and proverbs, wise advice from numerous teachers from Socrates to Bertrand Russell and beyond.³ Among the many sharp and (to my mind) telling criticisms which Martin advances against Grayling's project, the most interesting is the point that Grayling has completely ignored the *narrative* of the Bible: that, in its Christian form (which Martin assumes), it presents a gigantic, sprawling *story* which leads from the garden to the garden city, from creation to new creation, and so on. Grayling has no explicit narrative, and the only implicit one is that humans are trying to find their way through the world and live an authentic and hopefully happy life. Grayling, in other words, is not unlike the ancient Epicureans; as such, he is on all fours with the Enlightenment in general. Martin is pointing out that the Christian Bible is not the sort of book to which Grayling is offering an alternative. Grayling has, in fact, implicitly deconstructed the narrative.

Fair enough, I think. But the following week there was a very interesting letter from Gabriel Josipovici, pointing out that Martin's criticism, though valid in all sorts of ways, presupposes a specifically Christian reading of the two-testament narrative, and that from a Jewish perspective things might look very different.⁴ This is not the place to address this, though I do think it is a very

2 See particularly *Surprised by Hope* (London and San Francisco: SPCK and HarperSanFrancisco, 2007). The underlying exegesis for this work is mostly provided in *The Resurrection of the Son of God* (London and Minneapolis: SPCK and Fortress Press, 2003).

3 A.C. Grayling, *The Good Book: A Secular Bible*. London: Bloomsbury, 2011. Martin's review is in the *Times Literary Supplement* for June 3 2011, 25 f.

4 G. Josipovici, 'The Good Book', in *The Times Literary Supplement*, June 10 2011, 6.

interesting way in to an older problem: the whole New Testament is written, I suggest, from the perspective that Israel's ancient scriptures do indeed form a narrative in search of a climax, and that this climax is provided precisely by the kingdom-bringing life, death, resurrection and ascension of the Jewish Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth. But I well see that, without such a climax and indeed in reaction to such a claim, one might suggest, and many Jewish thinkers have suggested, either that a different sort of climax is required—whether the Mishnah provides such a thing would be an interesting question—or that it is wrong to read the Hebrew Bible from Genesis to Chronicles as an overarching narrative in the first place. All those questions are fascinating and could lead to fruitful debate.

But I return to the main track. I have argued in *Scripture and the Authority of God*, following up and filling in the detail for the briefer proposal I advanced in *The New Testament and the People of God*, that for a Christian to understand the whole Bible as in some way authoritative commits one not only to a narrative reading of the whole but to a layering within the narrative, so that the different layers contribute differently to the reading.⁵ My specific proposal was the analogy of an unfinished five-act play, in which followers of Jesus find themselves somewhere in the middle of Act 5 and are required to improvise from where the plot stands at the moment to the already-sketched conclusion. The point of this illustration, of course—which has been variously adapted and sometimes distorted by subsequent writers!—is to enable us to make sense of the New Testament's insistence on, say, the abolition of the food laws and of the Temple's sacrificial cult without simply collapsing into Marcionism. There are certain things which were right and proper for Act 3 which are not right and proper for Act 5. That's how stories work, and the rationalist attempt (which was perhaps inevitable after the Reformation, though that too is another question) to treat the whole Bible as undifferentiatedly 'the word of God' simply glosses over this problem, which then comes back to haunt the church on other fronts.

The five acts are Creation, Fall, the covenant with Israel, Jesus as Israel's Messiah, and the Spirit-driven church. Jewish readers do not characteristically think of the Fall in the way that subsequent Christian tradition has done, but there is still, emphatically within Genesis, a problem in chapters 3–11 to which, in the present redaction of the Pentateuch, the narrative of Abraham is presented as the answer, or the beginning of the answer. Most Christian retellings of this biblical narrative, in my experience, simply omit the covenant with

5 N.T. Wright, *The New Testament and the People of God* (London and Minneapolis: SPCK and Fortress Press, 1992), 139–143.

Israel, jumping straight from the human plight to the Jesus-shaped solution, and then wonder why they have trouble reading the Old Testament. But when we line up the story in the way I've done it makes very good sense to say, for instance, that within Act 3 it was vital, when Israel consisted of a single ethnically and geographically confined people, to have certain restrictions, dietary and otherwise, which Mark 7 and parallels then indicates are no longer needed. I developed the model of the five-act play, in fact, in order to enable precisely this kind of layered and nuanced view of scripture's authority. Act 3 is normative for Act 5 not in that the actors in Act 5 simply repeat the speeches from that earlier stage of the drama—that isn't how plays work, at least not classically—but it remains normative in the sense that it's the back story, it's the earlier stage in the drama, which has shaped and determined the climax of Act 4 and thus the implementation of Act 5.

I have, then, offered this model as a way of understanding how the concept of scripture's authority might actually make both coherent and practical sense. I now want, in the second part of this paper, to summarize the two new chapters in the current edition, which examine specific topics to see more clearly how the model works in practice.

2 Scripture and Sabbath

I chose Sabbath and Monogamy as the two special topics for two reasons. First, they are not currently as hot a pair of potatoes as some other issues one might have imagined. There was no point going for topics whose highly contentious nature would have got in the way of exemplifying the theory. Second, they challenge quite radically the usual post-Enlightenment understanding of how things move from Old Testament to New Testament.

Let me explain. Within much modern Christian discourse (and even non-Christian discourse in which, for instance, journalists try to make sense of what Christians are saying), there has been a long-standing assumption that the New Testament opposes what it sees as 'Jewish legalism'. When we read the gospels the Sabbath is probably the prime example: the Pharisees have all these recondite rules about what you can and can't do on the Sabbath, and Jesus goes ahead and breaks them all, demonstrating that God isn't interested in petty rules and regulations but rather in love and healing and forgiveness. That is the picture—the caricature, at least—by which many generations have operated. It is then assumed, though the question rarely comes up in the rest of the New Testament, that the virtual disappearance of the Sabbath is because it was a 'Jewish law' whereas the early Christians believed in grace.

Now of course this law-grace antithesis is precisely what the New Perspective on Paul has challenged so radically. But even for those who have resisted the New Perspective in all its ways, there is a problem: because those who resist are usually self-confessed 'Bible Christians', and there, right across the Old Testament, is the sabbath. How do you explain the shift from a world in which the sabbath is vital, central and non-negotiable, rooted in both creation and covenant, to a world in which it isn't even mentioned except as something which is scarcely relevant any more? Note, for instance, that whenever Paul summarizes the law, and declares that it is fulfilled in Christ, or in the Spirit, or through love, the sabbath is always conspicuous by its absence. What has happened? By what right do the early Christians set aside something so central?

As myself professing one particular sub-branch of the New Perspective, I am not about to collapse back into the law/grace antithesis of the Old, and largely Lutheran, Perspective. Instead I have argued in the relevant chapter that what we find in the New Testament does in fact demonstrate the major shift from Act 3 to Act 4, which is, from one viewpoint at least, the shift from promise to fulfilment. The sabbath, observed weekly, constituted a set of regular signposts pointing forward to the coming 'rest', the day of refreshment when God would visit his people and set them free from their continuing slavery. Jesus' primary announcement about the kingdom of God, however, contains the note that 'the time is fulfilled' (Mark 1.15, etc.). We have 'arrived' somewhere—in a sense yet to be determined; but part of the point of Jesus' kingdom-announcement is that the time of waiting is past and the time of fulfilment, however strange and unexpected, is here.⁶ The result is that you don't put up signposts any more. To do so would be to deny that you had arrived. You don't put up a signpost to Edinburgh in the middle of Princes Street.

A further indication that this note of eschatological fulfilment, rather than the substitution of grace for law, is what's really going on is the strong hint of Jubilee which we find in, for instance, Luke 4 and Matthew 18. Jesus' evocation of Isaiah 61 points back to Leviticus 25. The time of *forgiveness* is at hand—a notion which subsequent Christianity has domesticated and individualized but which, we should assume, carried in its first-century context that same note of the great Sabbath, the long-awaited moment when debts would be written off.⁷ This then becomes central to the early Christian project, as the attempt

6 Many have pointed out the probable, and probably deliberate, echo here of Dan. 7.22: 'the time arrived when the Holy Ones gained possession of the kingdom'.

7 This too has an echo of Daniel: in 9.24 'seventy weeks of years' are decreed 'to finish the

at property-sharing in the early church suggests. And, within Paul's theology, one could even suggest that the whole idea of resting from one's labours has been translated into one of his central doctrines: justification by faith apart from works. Hebrews, of course, retains a sense of a still-future moment of 'rest', though equally the book insists that Jesus is the point when the promises were basically fulfilled. What I am suggesting is that in the New Testament we have a sense of fulfilment, of ultimate sabbath; that, just as Jesus is from one point of view the new Temple (the new kind of sacred place or space), so he and the time of his public career are from a similar angle the new sabbath (the new kind of sacred time). And Act 5 is then launched as a different sort of time, still linear and looking for an ultimate future, but now shot through with a sense of the 'already'. This is a completely different viewpoint, hermeneutically speaking, from the idea that the sabbath is part of Jewish legalism and that Jesus and Paul came to abolish such things, however much scriptural warrant they possessed.

3 Monogamy

The most obviously interesting thing about my second case study, Monogamy, is that it too gives the lie to any suggestion that the Old Testament is a book of strict rules while the New Testament tells you the old rules are now redundant. Since that crude and caricatured viewpoint has, sadly, dominated a great deal of ecclesial discussion about the authority of scripture, it is worth while looking at this particular topic as a clear counter-example. Monogamy itself, of course, is under attack in some quarters today, as is only to be expected in an increasingly post-Christian society, but I have yet to hear clear calls within even the highly liberal ends of the Christian community for the introduction of either polygamy or polyamory. (The Mormons are in a category of their own.)

And of course when we look at the Bible monogamy seems to go in the opposite direction to sabbath. The Old Testament is, to put it mildly, not particularly worried about how many wives people have. Think of Abraham and Jacob; think, particularly, of David and Solomon. It is possible that the narrators, in telling of the domestic troubles of Abraham and Sarah, of Jacob and his two wives plus two extras, and in particular of David and Solomon, are trying to tell us something surreptitiously, but it remains below the surface.

transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity,' etc. Seventy times seven: the greatest Jubilee of them all.

Solomon's explicit problem is not that he had a lot of wives, but that the ones he had led him astray from single-minded loyalty to Israel's God. Some of the Pentateuchal laws take it for granted that people will have more than one wife, and legislate accordingly.⁸

But in the New Testament it is simply assumed that this time is now over. The matter is not even explicitly discussed. But just as in the Old Testament divorce is permitted and given a legal framework while in the teaching of Jesus and Paul it is basically prohibited with only very slight leeway, so with monogamy itself. We simply cannot regard the Old Testament as a book of fierce legalism and the New Testament as the book of soft options and easygoing inclusivity. What we find, instead, is that the New Testament writers, and arguably Jesus himself, believe firmly that the new creation is being launched, and that in this new creation there is to be a reinhabiting of the principle of Genesis 2: one man and one woman, a new and lifelong social unit. That is Jesus' answer, in Mark 10, to the question of divorce, where he explains that the Mosaic legislation was given 'because of the hardness of your hearts'. Whether at this juncture we are hearing Jesus or Mark, or both, isn't my point. The point is that here it is assumed that Jesus is bringing some kind of cure for hardness of heart. This is, in other words, the moment of new creation, of the redemption of Israel from the situation which the Mosaic law could hedge about with legislation but could not change. The gospels and Paul alike assume (a) the goodness of the original creation and (b) the purpose of Israel's God, enacted now through Jesus, in rescuing and remaking it. On the basis of these two principles, both of which were controversial in the second century as they are today, the New Testament writers insist on monogamy. They know, of course, that there will be converts from other lifestyles. If someone is converted while having more than one wife, he is not instructed to put away all wives except one. But he is not to become an officeholder within the church. (The case of women does not arise at that point, since though polygamy was frequent in the ancient world polyandry was scarcely known.) That, interestingly, was the position of the Pastorals,⁹ as it is the position of those in, for instance, the African church who face the analogous problem today.

It is not accidental, then, that the final scene of the book of Revelation is the marriage of the Messiah and his bride. The author is clearly envisaging an ultimate future in which the creational symbols of Genesis 1 and 2 are all fulfilled in a new way, and the male-plus-female symbol at the heart of creation

8 E.g. Ex 21.7–11; Dt 21.15–17.

9 1 Tim. 3.2; Tit. 1.6.

is taken up into a new, rich reality which affirms, even while it transcends, the notion of monogamy. Monogamy, I suggest, is in fact a pointer to one of today's urgently needed cosmic truths: that the creator's purpose is not to split heaven and earth apart, but rather, as in Ephesians 1.10, to bring them together in a costly but wonderfully enriching unity. Ephesians, of course, sees that purpose already realised in Jesus the Messiah; and the book then uses that heaven-and-earth unity as the model for the unity not only of Jew and Gentile in the Messiah, but also of the Messiah and the church which is glimpsed as a great mystery, under the reality of husband and wife, in chapter 5.

Conclusion

What do these case studies suggest about the question of scripture and God's authority? Principally this: that, as Matthew's Jesus says, all authority in heaven and on earth is given to *him*, not primarily to the texts that his followers would write. But to say that Jesus has authority is not just to say that Jesus has the right to tell people what they may and may not do. (The downgrading of Christian faith into 'religion', and of 'religion' into a list of contested rules and regulations, is one of the scourges of our time, soaking into popular Christian thinking as well as secular imagination.) To say that Jesus has authority, an authority then put into practice *through* scripture in the life of the church and its mission to the world, is to say something about eschatology, particularly about the fulfillment of the ancient creational purposes in Jesus, so that old signposts such as Sabbath are now not needed and old permissions such as polygamy and divorce are now inappropriate. One cannot, in other words, see the Bible simply 'in the flat', with something being validated just because you can find it in the Bible (think of Solomon's polygamy!). One must rather, from the Christian perspective, see the Bible in this layered, nuanced fashion, as a story with different moments, a symphony with different movements, in which the final scene returns triumphantly to the opening one, though now transforming it thoroughly, in a moment of ultimate fulfillment. Over against Gnosticism, which collapses Acts 1 and 2 into one another and does its best to omit Act 3 altogether, the New Testament assumes a narrative in which the kingdom-bringing work of Jesus draws Act 3 to its appointed goal ('when the time had fully come,' says Paul¹⁰), thereby addressing the problem of Act 2 and reinstating the project of Act 1. And scripture is then part of the Spirit-

10 Gal. 4.4.

given means, along with the *koinonia* of the church and the strange new-Temple significance of the sacraments, by which the people who find themselves in Act 5 are able to improvise appropriately as they move towards the ultimate goal. Far too much discussion of scripture and its authority, in my view, has simply capitulated to post-Reformation and post-Enlightenment caricatures. It would be good to get a more holistic view, a more eschatological view, indeed a more biblical view of biblical authority.

Elective Affinity: Second Peter's Reception of Paul

Martin G. Ruf

Introduction

Paul knew Peter personally. His record of their encounters at Jerusalem and Antioch in the two first chapters of the letter to the Galatians leaves hardly any doubts about the historicity of these incidents. As the same verses reveal, their relationship saw some ups and downs. Particularly, the name of Antioch is associated with a crisis between these two leading figures of Early Christianity. The matter of their disagreement, however, was not so much a *theological* issue as the question of how rigorously to translate theological views into practice. Just like Paul, Peter seems to have thought that, as a matter of principle, in the congregations of Christ-believers, Jews and non-Jews could and would have common meals. It was only with respect to some Jewish fellow believers who were less keen when it came to tearing down the traditional boundaries, that he became more hesitating and retired from common meals. *Theologically*, he would agree with Paul. Nevertheless, Paul never stressed their theological unanimity by calling Peter his 'beloved brother'.¹

The fictitious Peter writing the Second Epistle of Peter does call Paul his 'beloved brother'. And he does so precisely in a context where he emphasizes their common views: Paul's message is the same—in all of his letters (3:16). That this is not a minor decoration becomes clear from the fact that apart from a reference to his own—alleged—first letter (3:1), Paul is the only author whom Second Peter, in order to underline theological affinity, elects to mention by name. Puzzlingly enough, this theological affinity is anything but apparent throughout the letter. The text of Second Peter does not display a significant amount of specifically Pauline theology. Paul is never quoted explicitly,² nor are recognizably Pauline themes amply discussed.

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- 1 One of the most thorough studies of the relationship of Peter and Paul, both from a historical point of view and from reception history is Lothar Wehr, *Petrus und Paulus, Kontrahenten und Partner. Die beiden Apostel im Spiegel des Neuen Testaments, der apostolischen Väter und früher Zeugnisse ihrer Verehrung* (NTAbh neue Folge 30; Münster: Aschendorff 1996).
 - 2 I am aware of various suggestions for a definition of 'quotation'. For the present purpose, it will be sufficient to define 'quotation (of Paul)' as a piece of text within Second Peter that undoubtedly originates in a Pauline or deutero-Pauline text, the only criteria thus being recognizability. This definition also includes possible phenomena of text-editing by the

Yet, irrespective of the fact that Paul is not reflected in the form of common theological statements, Second Peter belongs to the reception history of the Pauline writings. There is even more Paul in Second Peter than many scholars have dared to see. This article will provide a sketch of Second Peter's attitude towards Paul, Pauline theology and Pauline letter writing. Three aspects will provide access to Second Peter's view: An initial section will evaluate Second Peter's remarks about the Pauline letters for defining the place that Second Peter ascribes to them in his system of authoritative texts. In a second step, an analysis of some standard letter components in Second Peter will show that his letter writing in these sections is more biased by Pauline epistolographic features than the counterparts in First Peter. In a third section, three examples of Pauline phrasing will reveal a playful liberty in dealing with Pauline ideas and expressions on the one hand, and on the other, Second Peter's striving for a status side by side with the Pauline letters.

1 The Pauline Letters in Second Peter's System of Authoritative Writings

For the author of Second Peter, the totality of authoritative texts can be split into groups. In 2 Peter 3:2, he presents the readers with a bipartite segmentation of the textual foundations of Christian doctrine, calling the first groep 'the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets' (ἀ προειρημένα ῥήματα ὑπὸ τῶν ἁγίων προφητῶν) and the second one 'the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles' (ἡ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐντολή τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτῆρος). Connected with a simple καί, the two groepes do not show the slightest indication of a distinction in importance or function; both groups together

author of Second Peter. On some of these sometimes neglected forms of text-editing see Pancratius C. Beentjes, "Inverted Quotations in the Bible: A Neglected Stylistic Pattern", *Biblica* 63 (1982), 506–523; Pancratius C. Beentjes, "Discovering a New Path of Intertextuality: Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics", in: *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. L.J. de Regt, J. de Waard, and J.P. Fokkelman; Assen: Van Gorcum 1996), 31–50; Marjo C.A. Korpel, "Exegesis in the Work of Ilmilku of Ugarit", in: *Intertextuality in Ugarit and Israel* (ed. J.C. de Moor; Leiden: Brill 1998), 86–111. As an implication of this definition, the saying of the day's coming like a thief in 2 Peter 3:10 is not counted among the Pauline quotations because, despite the considerable amount of syllables overlapping with 1 Thess 5:2, the non-Pauline elements in this verse which in turn can be found in other versions of the saying (e.g. in the Apocalypse of John) do not admit a clear judgment about its origin.

serve as a kind of reservoir from which one has to draw for relevant doctrine and applicable theological views. This becomes clear from the task that the author allots to the two Petrine Epistles: They are meant to remind the intended audience of the doctrinal views of these two groups of texts in order to give reliable theological answers to current questions, as he states in 2 Peter 3:1–2.³

Also, the Pauline letters figure as a group of writings. At the end of his theological explanations in the third chapter, the author of Second Peter takes distance from 'the ignorant and unstable people' (οἱ ἀμαθεῖς καὶ ἀστήρικτοι) who 'distort' (στρεβλοῦσιν) Paul's letters which, according to Second Peter, display no other message than he does himself (2 Pet 3:15–16). Paul's letters are paralleled with a group of writings called 'the other Scriptures' (αἱ λοιπαὶ γραφαί), which suffer the same treatment from the people referred to as being ignorant and unstable. Other than in the beginning of the third chapter, these two groups are not just two separate groups of writings. Rather, the adjective λοιπός indicates that the label γραφή also applied to the Pauline letters.⁴ Unfortunately, Second Peter does not explain if and how Paul's letters have to be integrated in the bipartite structure of 'the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets' and 'the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles'. Nor does he relate the word 'Scriptures' (γραφαί) to these two groups. For our discussion of Second Peter's reception of Paul, the crucial point will be to know if, according to Second Peter, Paul's letters belonged to the 'command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles'; a question which will be answered positively in the following paragraphs.

One of the remarkable things about the two text groups of 2 Peter 3:2 is the wording of the labels the author applies to them. Why does he not just speak of 'the prophets', but highlights their holiness? And on which grounds does he call the second group 'the *command* given by our Lord etc.'? Our initial suspicion is that Second Peter's language use in either case represents theological parlance shared with (at least some) other Early Christian groups and can (at least to a certain degree) hint at the identity of the writings encompassed. As a matter of consequence, the initial point for our considerations will

3 For the author of Second Peter, this is not bare theory. In the verses which follow, he unfolds (some aspects of) his eschatology and moral guidelines for the present time in view of the eschatological scenario with the aid of textual fragments that originate from writings belonging either to the Jewish or to the Christian tradition, cf. Martin G. Ruf, *Die heiligen Propheten, eure Apostel und ich. Metatextuelle Studien zum Zweiten Petrusbrief* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 479–555.

4 Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter* (WBC 50; Waco, Tx: Word Books 1983), 333; Gene L. Green, *Jude & Second Peter* (BECNT; Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker 2008), 340.

be a short investigation on ἅγιοι προφήται and ἐντολή τοῦ κυρίου in other Early Christian literature.

When phrasing the first verses of the third chapter, the author of Second Peter appears to have made use of a passage of the letter of Jude. Jude had reminded his readers of the words of the ‘apostles of the Lord’ who had announced the coming of some people labelled as ‘scoffers’ who would live according to ‘their own ungodly desires’ (Jude 17–18). Second Peter expands and generalizes Jude’s text. For him, the coming of these people (who, according to Second Peter, can be described more precisely than Jude did, see 2 Pet 3:3–4) constitutes just *one* point of the predictions, although undoubtedly an important one (τοῦτο πρῶτον γινώσκοντες; 2 Pet 3:3). Moreover, it is not only the apostles who have announced the events now met by the church. Rather, it is the testimony of the apostles *and* the prophets that leads to the insight that the present situation is anything but an unforeseen development. The prophets who foretold the actual events are called ‘holy’ (ἅγιοι). On the one hand, qualifying theologically important items as ‘holy’ belongs to Second Peter’s own writing style.⁵ On the other hand, it can be observed in other Early Christian writings that a stress on the holiness of the prophets regularly occurs in contexts where a writer sees prophecies of future events coming true in his time.⁶ The most evident examples are the only two occurrences of ‘holy prophets’ beside 2 Peter 3:2 within the New Testament, both of which are to be found in the Lucan writings.⁷ In Luke 1:70, Zechariah praises the Lord because He has ‘raised a horn of salvation in the house of his servant David’ as He had announced ‘through the mouth of his holy prophets from old’ (διὰ στόματος τῶν ἁγίων ἀπ’ αἰῶνος προφητῶν αὐτοῦ). In Acts 3:21, Lucan Peter explains that

5 The place of the only ‘biographical event’ Second Peter refers to, i.e. the mountain where Jesus’ transfiguration took place, is called ἅγιος (2 Pet 1:18), as is the way of living he wants to promote (2 Pet 3,11) and the (primarily moral?) Christian message—in his words: the ἐντολή (2 Pet 2:21).

6 Giuseppe Ghiberti, “I «santi profeti» (Lc 1,70; At 3,21; 2 Pt 3,2). La santità nella meditazione della parola di Dio,” in *“Generati da una parola di verità (Gc 1,18)”* (ed. S. Grasso and E. Manicardi; RivBSup 47; Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane, 2006), 223–234 does not dwell on this aspect.

7 For the sake of brevity, I do not discuss Eph 3:5 (ὡς νῦν ἀπεκαλύφθη τοῖς ἁγίοις ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις ἐν πνεύματι) because many scholars hold that the author of Ephesians speaks about Early Christian prophets in this verse, see e.g. Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians* (WBC 42, Dallas, Tx: Word Books 1990), 153 who furthermore thinks that ἁγίοις only refers to ἀποστόλοις but not to προφήταις. Michel Bouttier, *L’épître de Saint Paul aux Ephésiens* (CNT 9b; Genève: Labor et Fides 1991), 143, however, interprets ἁγίοις as a noun and ἀποστόλοις αὐτοῦ καὶ προφήταις as an apposition.

the heaven had to 'receive' Jesus until the time of 'the restoration of all things' as God had spoken 'through the mouth of the holy prophets' using the very same wording. While the only occurrence of a 'holy prophet' in the Septuagint (applied to Moses) does not allow any conclusion on the connotative force of this expression,⁸ the extracanonical evidence of the second century corroborates our observation. In his letter to the Philadelphians, Ignatius of Antioch calls the prophets ἅγιοι because, in their message, they referred to the Gospel, waited for the Christ and were saved by faith (Ign. *Phld.* 5:2). According to Justin Martyr, a holy prophetic spirit (ἅγιον προφητικὸν πνεῦμα) was acting in Moses, David and the prophets when they prophesied concerning Christ and the time of the early church.⁹ In *Dialogue with Trypho* 82:1, he opposes the ἅγιοι προφήται to the false prophets and false teachers (ψευδοπροφήται and ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι) whose message about Christ is not correct, in a very similar way to 2 Peter 2:1.¹⁰ In several instances, holiness is attributed to the prophets also by Theophilus of Antioch, another second century apologetic writer. Mostly, he does so in passages where he explains his ideas on prophecy, using a vocabulary reminiscent of the words used by Second Peter. For Theophilus, as for Second Peter, one of the prophets' activities is foretelling (προειπεῖν) what later becomes reality. The Holy Spirit leads them to announce things long before (προκαταγγέλλειν) they come true.¹¹

To summarize our observations thus far: From Luke to Theophilus, Christian writers attribute holiness to the prophets when they want to stress that their prophecies come true.¹² The author of Second Peter shares in this Early

8 In the book of Wisdom, which was not translated from the Hebrew, but was written in Greek and most probably dates from between 30 B.C.E. and 70 C.E. (see on this John J. Collins, *Jewish Wisdom in the Hellenistic Age* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox 1997), 179), Moses is called a προφήτης ἅγιος (11:1). According to this verse, Wisdom made the works of Israel successful under the leadership of a holy prophet (ἐν χειρὶ προφήτου ἁγίου).

9 1 Apol. 32:3; 44:1; 53:6; Dial. 32:3; 56:5.

10 In my dissertation I have argued that Justin here displays his knowledge of Second Peter; see Ruf, *Die heiligen Propheten*, 359–362. But even if this is correct and Justin indeed depends on Second Peter, this does not invalidate my argumentation. Still then, Justin belongs to the group of Early Christian writers who, on this point, share the same theological parlance. The same is true if Theophilus is dependent on Second Peter.

11 See Autol. 1,14; 11,32–34; 111,17.

12 For the sake of brevity, I will not dwell at length on the question of which books were included in the concept of 'holy prophets'. A look at the writings actually alluded to by Second Peter, as well as the writings that are labelled 'holy prophets' elsewhere, teaches that the 'words spoken by the holy prophets' surpass the group of 'prophetical writings' in

Christian theological parlance. On this basis, we may reasonably assume that also when he calls Jesus' message as preached by the apostles a 'commandment' (ἐντολή) in the very same verse, our author might avail himself of a more widespread expression.

The use of the noun ἐντολή to designate Jesus' message is no more inspired by Jude 17 than the label 'holy prophets' was. Jude uses neither ἐντολή nor the verb ἐντέλλεσθαι anywhere in his letter. In his text, processed in 2 Peter 3:2, he only spoke about the apostles' predictions. For Second Peter, however, ἐντολή seems to be an important technical term. In his eyes, this ἐντολή, just like the prophets, deserves the qualification ἅγιος. 2 Peter 2:21, the very same verse in which holiness is ascribed to the ἐντολή, shows that ἐντολή designates the whole of the Christian tradition (παραδοθῆναι) that has been taught to the members of the church and that had been accepted by them in their conversion, stressing its moral dimension.¹³ For our main question, i.e. to know to which place Second Peter appoints the Pauline letters, we will have to examine whether ἐντολή as an umbrella term for Christian teaching can encompass epistolary literature.¹⁴

In the New Testament, it is mainly the Johannine writings which make use of the singular ἐντολή or the plural form ἐντολαί.¹⁵ Some of these occurrences in the Gospel and the Epistles of John connect the singular ἐντολή with Christ, for example when the Johannine Christ tells the disciples that he will give them a new ἐντολή (John 13:35). At first sight, this may seem comparable to

a narrower sense. Second Peter here holds to the common Early Christian view that all of the Scriptures prophesied about Jesus and the time of the first Christians.

- 13 It is almost undisputed among scholars that both occurrences of the term ἐντολή (2 Pet 3:2 and 2:21) have to be regarded together, see e.g. Lewis R. Donelson, *I & II Peter and Jude. A Commentary* (NTL; Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox 2010), 266; Green, *Jude & Second Peter*, 313. For ἐντολή stressing the moral aspect of Christian teaching see Peter H. Davids, *The Letters of 2 Peter and Jude* (PNTC; Grand Rapids, Mich and Cambridge UK: Eerdmans, Nottingham: Apollos, 2006), 261; Michele Mazzeo, *Lettere di Pietro. Lettera di Giuda* (I libri biblici; Milan: Paoline 2002), 311; Eric Fuchs and Pierre Reymond, *La deuxième épître de Saint Pierre. L'épître de Saint Jude* (CNT; Neuchâtel and Paris: Delachaux et Niestle 1988), 107.
- 14 For the sake of brevity, this article will only discuss the evidence in the canonical writings. But it goes without saying that the evidence of the Apostolic Fathers, in our case mainly Ignatius, First and Second Clement, the Didache and the Letter of Barnabas would complete the picture, see also Ruf, *Die heiligen Propheten*, 141–145. An additional investigation on the corresponding verb ἐντέλλεσθαι with Jesus as subject (Matt 17:9; 28:20; John 15:14.17; Acts 1:2) does not change the view given in this article.
- 15 For a general impression of ἐντολή in the New Testament see M. Limbeck, "ἐντολή" *EWNT* 1:121–125, and, with the due critical attitude, G. Schrenk, "ἐντολή" *TWNT* 11:542–553.

Second Peter's attributing the ἐντολή to the 'Lord and Saviour' (ἡ ... ἐντολή τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτήρος). However, the similarities between Johannine and Petrine speaking of the ἐντολή of Christ are confined to the bare idea of calling the teachings ascribed to Christ an ἐντολή. An investigation on the connotations and collocations shows hardly any overlap between the Johannine and Petrine concept. 'John', for example, frequently opposes Christ's new ἐντολή to the old one, the new one being connected to or consisting in brotherly love among Christians.¹⁶ By doing so, his ἐντολή has a summarizing character. What Christ taught, can be expressed in the one ἐντολή of brotherly love. The Petrine use of ἐντολή, however, does not suggest a summarizing character at all. His ἐντολή does not reduce to a summary, but embraces the whole of Christ's teachings. The Johannine occurrences of the plural ἐντολαί are even more distant from Second Peter's collective term ἐντολή.¹⁷ Accordingly, theological affinities to Second Peter's use of ἐντολή have to be sought elsewhere.

Apart from writings bearing the name of John, only two more verses in the New Testament mention the ἐντολή of the Lord, both of them in the Pauline writings. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul, in order to underline the authority that has to be accorded to his words, points out that what he writes is κυρίου ἐντολή (2 Cor 14:37).¹⁸ What is intriguingly consistent with the Petrine idea of Christ's ἐντολή is the means of transmission: The ἐντολή is handed down to the churches by an apostle. Second Peter displays this very aspect by making a second genitive dependent from ἐντολή: ἡ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐντολή τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτήρος (2 Peter 3:2). Christ's ἐντολή is also the ἐντολή of the apostles.

In contrast to the usage in Second Peter, ἐντολή is not a general term in 1 Corinthians 14:37. It does not designate Christian teaching as a whole, but a single instruction given by Paul to the church. But some decennia later, the step towards a general term is made in Pauline Christianity. In the second verse in Pauline literature that uses the word ἐντολή, i.e. 1 Timothy 6:14, 'Timothy' is

16 See John 13:34; 15:12; 1 John 2:7–11; 3:23; 4:21; 2 John 1:4–6.

17 John 14:15, 21; 15:10; 1 John 2:3, 4; 3:22, 24; 5:2 f.; 2 John 6. The contents of this plural remains rather vague. Often a connection is made with loving God, knowing God and remaining in God. Mostly, this plural functions as an object to the verb τηρεῖν, to keep, which is a customary collocation that leaves to the Johannine ἐντολαί the traditional character of commandments. From the Petrine ἐντολή, however, it is possible to turn away (ἀποστέψαι; see 2 Peter 2:21). This unusual collocation makes the Petrine ἐντολή almost a place—or even a person.

18 Κύριος here clearly means Christ, not Godfather see Wolfgang Schrage, *Der erste Brief an die Korinther*. 1 Kor 11, 17–14, 40 (ΕΚΚNT 7,3; Zürich: Benziger 1999), 460.

exhorted to keep the ἐντολή ‘without spot or blame’ (ἄσπιλον ἀνεπίλημπτον), ἐντολή describing the teachings transmitted by Pastoral Paul as a whole.¹⁹

The occurrences of the word ἐντολή in Pauline literature may thus be sparse in number, but they constitute a plausible bridge towards the use of ἐντολή in Second Peter. With the Pauline concept of ἐντολή in mind, it is reasonable to assume that, in addition to Gospel literature,²⁰ Early Christian letters were also considered as part of ἡ τῶν ἀποστόλων ἐντολή τοῦ κυρίου καὶ σωτήρος by the author of Second Peter and thus belonged to the second group of authoritative writings according to 2 Peter 3:2.

2 Pauline Standard Letter Components in Second Peter

Second Peter’s reception of Paul is not limited to giving Pauline letters a place among the authoritative writings. Rather, Pauline letter writing itself served to him as an epistolographic model that he imitated in his own letter and adapted to his needs. In a certain way, this holds true for the whole of Early Christian letter writing. As far as we know, Paul was the first one to make extensive use of the letter as a means to stay in contact with the churches to which he felt he had been called as an apostle. Early Christian letter writers after Paul followed his footprints, some of them inventively and freely advancing and refining what they found, others with a stronger stress on imitation.²¹ One of the Early Christian writings that presuppose Pauline letter writing is the First Epistle of Peter,²² which is attested to at least by the form of the

19 See Lorenz Oberlinner, *Die Pastoralbriefe 1. Kommentar zum ersten Timotheusbrief* (HTKNT 11,1; Freiburg, Basel, Vienna: Herder 1994), 296.

20 That Gospel literature belonged to the ‘ἐντολή of our Lord and Saviour transmitted by the apostles’ can be confirmed from 1 Clement 13:3 where a compilation of words known from the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel of Matthew and the Sermon on the Plain in the Gospel of Luke is called ἐντολή and παραγγέλματα. Possibly, also some verses in the Didache (Did. 1:5; 2:1; 4:13; 13:5.7) and the Letter of Barnabas (Barn. 16:9a; 19:2–3) hint into the same direction, see Ruf, *Die heiligen Propheten*, 144–145.

21 François Vouga, “Der Brief als Form der apostolischen Autorität,” in *Studien und Texte zur Formgeschichte* (TANZ 7; ed. K. Berger et al., Tübingen and Basel: Francke 1992), particularly 49–54.

22 On the (ongoing?) discussion of to what degree First Peter is Pauline in theology and language see the relevant passages in the commentaries on First Peter, e.g. John H. Elliott, 1 Peter (AB 37b; New York etc.: Doubleday 2000), 37–40, or pertinent scholarly monographs as Jens Herzer, *Petrus oder Paulus? Studien über das Verhältnis des ersten Petrusbriefes zur paulinischen Tradition* (WUNT 103; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck 1998).

letter prescript (1Pet 1:1–2) and by the 'Pauline' way of involving co-workers in missionary activities, particularly in the (writing,) transportation and delivery of an apostolic letter (1Pet 5:12–13). In 2Peter 3:1, the author claims that his letter is the 'second', a sequel to First Peter, as it were. Usually, one can expect that a pseudepigraphic writer who wants to insert his own letter into an existing collection of letters or join his own letter to one single available letter, applies apt literary devices to guarantee that the readers will believe the identity of the writers. To this end, it is not necessary to completely imitate the writing style or literally copy all of the typical features of a prescript, as the Deuteropauline and Pastoral Epistles show.²³ A certain set of common traits in the letter prescript and perhaps in the issues touched on would be sufficient. Second Peter makes use of this minimum of exigencies in order to build up the fiction of the two writers' identity. The strange thing about Second Peter is that, in some letter components, he falls back on Pauline features where First Peter had felt free to follow his own ideas, which means that Second Peter in some respects bears more similarity to Pauline letterwriting than First Peter. This is particularly true for a passage between the opening parts of the letter (frequently concluded by a thanksgiving or eulogy) and the letter body, i.e. the self-recommendation or biographical retrospect. But, also, a reading of Second Peter's reworked version of First Peter's letter prescript alongside Pauline prescripts leads to some intriguing observations.

For a letter writer, the crucial place to fix his identity is in two parts of the letter prescript.²⁴ In the *superscription*, a sender gives his name and, if he writes as an authority of some kind, perhaps also a title or the function in which he writes. The third part of the letter prescript, the *salutation*, consists in most cases of a standardized greeting formula. Yet, the possibility of minor

23 The fact that Second Peter does not imitate the style and theology of First Peter, has led to a long scholarly history of doubts whether First Peter really can be the letter Second Peter alludes to in 2Peter 3:1 and to various hypotheses concerning the 'true' identity of the letter Second Peter refers to. In view of the pseudepigraphic minimalism as described above, these hypotheses prove to be unnecessary. See on this topic Martin G. Ruf, "Ein neuer Versuch den Petrus-Code zu knacken: Der zweite Petrusbrief als allographische Fortsetzung", in *Verhaal als identiteitscode* (eds. B. Becking and A. Merz, Utrechtse Reeks 60, Utrecht: Universiteit 2008), 255–265.

24 On standard letter components see Hans-Josef Klauck, *Ancient Letters and the New Testament. A Guide to Context and Exegesis* (trans. D.P. Bailey; Waco, Tx: Baylor University Press 2006), 17–26, on the letter prescript particularly 17–21 (= Hans-Josef Klauck, *Die antike Briefliteratur und das Neue Testament. Ein Lehr- und Arbeitsbuch*, (UTB 2022; Paderborn etc.: Schöningh 1998), 42–44).

variations on the standard allowed a writer to leave his own mark even in this part.²⁵ It is anything but a surprise then that precisely in these two sections the congruence between the two canonical Petrine Epistles is particularly evident. Nevertheless, Second Peter does not simply copy First Peter's phrasing. Two of his additions result in a text which may remind readers of Paul's letters—even more than First Peter does.

Compared to First Peter, the author of Second Peter adds another title in the superscription. While First Peter contents himself with being an apostle of Jesus Christ (ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 1 Pet 1:1), Second Peter calls himself 'a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ' (δοῦλος καὶ ἀπόστολος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; 2 Pet 1:1). First Peter's way of introducing himself already imitates Pauline practice. In most of his letters, Paul presents himself as an apostle in the superscription, an example which is followed by most Deuteropauline and the Pastoral Epistles. And, what is more: with the exception of 'Peter', (historical and pseudonymous) Paul is the only New Testament letter writer to do so.²⁶ Since the opening to a letter has the function of an instruction as to how to read and receive the letter,²⁷ First Peter's prescript reveals the writer's desire for a reception of his letter side by side with—read: of equal rank with—the Pauline letters.

It is evident that the addition of another title by the hand of Second Peter has to be interpreted as an amplification of some kind. A self-designation as apostle does not seem enough to him. He does not simply align himself with First Peter and the majority of the Paulines. This amplification consists at least in two aspects, i.e. an aspect of *integration* and one of *specification*. Second Peter exceeds First Peter (and the Paulines that use exclusively 'apostle' as a title) by *integrating* another tradition of deducing and expressing leadership authority: While 'apostle' hints to the writer's being sent by Jesus Christ, 'servant' or 'slave' as honorific title underlines the writer's belonging to Christ and his faithfulness as a leader.²⁸ This tradition is mirrored by the Epistles of Jude, James and, in two instances also by Paul, i.e. Philippians and Romans. Just as 'Symeon', a

25 Epicurus' particular way of putting his greeting is considered noteworthy by Diogenes Laertius: καὶ ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς ἀντὶ τοῦ Χαίρειν Εὖ πράττειν καὶ Σπουδαίως ζῆν (Diog Laert X,14).

26 An exception to the rule is the letter written by Luke in the name of the 'apostles and presbyters' to the 'brothers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia', see Acts 15:23.

27 See on this Ruf, *Die heiligen Propheten*, 67–71.

28 On the background of Pauline theology, all Christians can be called 'servants of Christ' because Jesus bought them (1 Cor 7:23). In the tradition of the Hebrew Bible 'servant of God' is a honorific title used for leaders such as Abraham, Moses, David and a few others, see Bauckham, *Jude*, 2 *Peter*, 23.

surprising form of Peter's original name in the very beginning of the prescript, the designation 'slave' underlines the Jewish origins of Peter and Second Peter's theology. Read alongside the Pauline letters, the addition also has a *specifying* function: The parallel use of 'servant' and 'apostle' as titles in a superscription is also found in the Epistle to the Romans and the Pastoral Epistle to Titus. While differing from First Peter and the majority of the Pauline letters, the self-introduction puts Second Peter closer to these two letters. As in the first days of Second Peter's existence the Pastorals may not have been known to (all of the) intended and actual recipients, the self-introduction could suggest a reading of Second Peter specifically next to the Epistle to the Romans,²⁹ which is not only the longest and most systematic among Paul's letters, but seems also to have been the opening letter of Pauline letter collections from the earliest times.³⁰

First Peter's salutation formula does not remain unchanged either. The last words of his letter prescript were 'May grace and peace be multiplied to you' (χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη πληθυνθείη; 1 Pet 1:2). 'Grace and peace to you' corresponds exactly with the wording in virtually all Pauline letters;³¹ the Greek optative 'may be multiplied' (πληθυνθείη), however, is never used by Paul. It is a pattern from Semitic letter writing which is used by First Peter who thus creates a 'Petrine' style of greeting different from Paul's.³² Second Peter follows First

29 Please note that again and again Romans has been suggested as the letter Second Peter refers to in 2 Pet 3:15, e.g. Joseph B. Mayor, *The Epistle of St Jude and the Second Epistle of Peter*, London: Macmillan 1907, 264; Joseph Chaine, *Les épîtres catholiques. La seconde épître de Saint Pierre, les épîtres de Saint Jean, l'épître de Jude* (Paris: Gabalda 1939), 94; Anton Vögtle, *Der Judasbrief, der 2. Petrusbrief* (ΕΚΚΤ 22; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener 1994), 263. Furthermore, Bauckham, strongly put forward the view that Second Peter was written in Rome, see Bauckham, Jude, 2 Peter, 159, a view that has convinced many scholars. Only more recently have other suggestions on the origin entered the discussion again, see e.g. Anders Gerdmar, *Rethinking the Judaism-Hellenism Dichotomy. A Historiographical Case Study of Second Peter and Jude* (ConBNT 36, Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell 2001), especially 302–305.

30 See David Trobisch, *Paul's Letter Collection. Tracing the Origins* (Bolivar, Mo: Quiet Waters 2001); David Trobisch, *Die Entstehung der Paulusbriefsammlung: Studien zu den Anfängen christlicher Publizistik*, (NTOA 10, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1989).

31 Paul may even be regarded as the creator of the combination 'χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη' in the salutation. As far as I know 'χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη' has not yet been found in letters before Paul; see Martin Karrer, *Die Johannesoffenbarung als Brief. Studien zu ihrem literarischen, historischen und theologischen Ort* (FRLANT 140; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht 1986), 70.

32 'Petrine style' does not mean that others did not make use of the same greeting. The Epistle of Jude uses the same form, too. The Greek optative is inspired by a Hebrew-Aramaic

Peter, taking over the entire salutation from his alleged first letter. Then he adds: ‘through the knowledge of God and of Jesus, our Lord (ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ Ἰησοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν).’ As Paul hardly ever fails to finish his salutation with ‘from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ (ἀπὸ θεοῦ πατρὸς ἡμῶν καὶ κυρίου Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ),’ ending the greeting with a mention of ‘God and Jesus, our Lord’ gives a Pauline sound to this salutation. There is no doubt that it is not entirely Pauline in character. Second Peter does not ascribe fatherhood to God as Paul does who, in turn, never speaks of ‘knowledge’ in a salutation. Nevertheless, a Pauline feature seems to have biased his addition. Hence, in both elements that are innovative in comparison to First Peter’s prescript Pauline conventions resonate so that, in some way, Pauline traits in Second Peter are stronger than in his alleged previous letter.

The second letter component where the author of Second Peter leans towards Pauline letter writing more than towards First Peter is the so-called self-recommendation.³³ In virtually all authentic letters, after a section of thanksgiving for the church concerned or a eulogy, Paul turns attention to his own person. Memories of the time he spent with the church, the foundation visit, the sending of a co-worker to keep in contact with the church, the relationship with the addressees, Paul as a model of how to behave, hardships Paul has come through, the apostle’s situation at the moment of writing—these are possible topics of this section. This peculiarity of Pauline letter writing seems to have been so recognizable that it was even imitated by the deuteropauline Epistle to the Colossians (Col 1:24–2:5). There, in the verses following the letter opening, a vicarious function is ascribed to Paul’s suffering.

In First Peter, however, whose theology, in more than only one instance, seems to mirror Pauline thought, a biographical or self-recommendatory section is completely missing. Throughout the letter, hardly any verbal form (or possessive pronoun) supports the impression of a personal, individual authorship by using the first person singular,³⁴ and the fiction of Petrine authorship is only feebly revisited at the beginning of the fifth chapter (1Pet 5:1–2) and in the greeting section (1Pet 5:12–14). In contrast, Second Peter exploits the pre-

iussive form, cf. Dan 3:31; 6:26 and b.Sanh. 11b and y.Sanh. 18d (letters under the name of Gamaliel), or more generally a common Ancient Eastern greeting pattern, see Karrer, *Johannesoffenbarung als Brief*, 71.

33 In this I follow Franz Schnider and Werner Stenger, *Studien zum neutestamentlichen Briefformular* (NTTS 11, Leiden etc.: Brill 1987), 50–68.

34 Exceptions are 1Pet 2:11 and 5:1 where paraenetic sections are introduced by παρακαλῶ, and 5:12, where the qualification of Silvanus as a faithful brother is disclosed as Peter’s view by using the phrase ὡς λογιζομαι.

established place in the letter form by adapting it to his own needs. In two short paragraphs, he turns the readers' or listeners' attention to his own person. Immediately subsequent to an opening section (2 Pet 1:3–11),³⁵ fictive Peter dwells on his personal situation at the moment of writing, the purpose of his writing and his relationship with the addressees. He builds up the fiction of a testament, written by a Peter who feels the end of his days approaching. Concerned about the addressees' theological orientation—just as Paul used to be in his letters—'Peter' wants to 'make every effort' to ensure that after his departure they 'will be able to remember these things on every occasion' (2 Pet 1:15). In the second part of this personal section (2 Pet 1:16–18), 'Peter' even gives a biographical retrospect by recalling the transfiguration on the 'Holy Mountain' where he (with some other disciples) became witness of heavenly glory being transferred to Jesus and a voice testifying to Jesus' sonship. Both parts are original; there are no direct Pauline equivalents in the sense of an unambiguous textual *Vorlage*. But they can easily be understood as variations on the Pauline self-recommendation, all the more as the function of this passage seems to be to stress Peter's apostolic authority, which is a well-known topic in Pauline letter-writing.

These few and certainly not exhaustive examples may suffice to show that, for Second Peter, the Pauline letters were authoritative not only with regard to their contents. Pauline letterwriting had become an epistolographic model for apostolic letters in general. This role of a model did not exclude modifications; rather, it served as a reservoir for ideas of how to write with apostolic authority, ideas that could be adapted to the present needs of a 'pseudapostolic' writer.

3 Pauline Phrasing Re-used (and Slightly Changed)

Besides the epistolographic outline, there is another point of contact between Second Peter and the Pauline letters. Despite the lack of a thorough discussion of Pauline themes throughout the letter, Pauline catchwords and Pauline phrasing crop up here and there in the letter. While Second Peter's orientation

35 There can be no doubt that the verses 2 Pet 1:3–11 form a rhetorical unit and replace the thanksgiving or eulogy; see Green, *Jude & Second Peter*, 179 who describes this section as the opening of the letter body because it introduces the fundamental themes of the letter. Duane F. Watson, *Invention, Arrangement, and Style: Rhetorical Criticism of Jude and 2 Peter* (SBL Dissertation Series 104; Atlanta, Ga: Scholars Press 1986) described 2 Pet 1:3–15 as the exordium.

towards Pauline letter components underlines the authoritative role of Paul's letters even with regard to their epistolary form, the following examples hint at another aspect of Second Peter's relationship towards Paul. Not only do they display agreement and confirmation of what Paul wrote, but some of them also reveal a kind of playful liberty in re-using Pauline words—as with well-known, dear, but not untouchably holy texts one may use and work with. At least in one instance, the re-used words seem to include the claim that Second Peter should be read side by side with the Pauline letters.

The first example comes from the passage that has been referred to earlier in this article: When speaking about his approaching death in the testament section, Second Peter uses the metaphor of a tent. He wants to 'refresh' the addressees' memory while still living 'in the tent of this body' (2 Pet 1:13) because he knows that 'the putting away of his tent' is near (2 Pet 1:14). And as if he wants to insist on this notion of a 'tent', the author repeats it in two successive verses.³⁶ A reader who is familiar with Pauline writings will inevitably be reminded of Paul's famous passage on the earthly and heavenly dwelling in the first verses of 2 Corinthians 5. Yet, there are hardly any verbal contacts between the two passages. Not even the word for 'tent' or 'hut' is the same: While Paul speaks of his σκήνος, Second Peter uses σκήνωμα. And given the fact that 'tent' was a fairly current metaphor for the body in antiquity, one could doubt whether Second Peter really is alluding to 2 Corinthians 5. But intertextual references in Second Peter are not simply made up of identical vocabulary. Not even where the author clearly hints to texts from Scripture does he quote them verbatim. In 2 Peter 1:13–14, it is the combination of two metaphors that links the two texts, i.e. the metaphor of a tent and the idea of undressing. Paul speaks of death as 'being unclothed' (ἐκδύεσθαι) from the earthly tent which is the body (2 Cor 5:4) and the same idea is present in these two verses in Second Peter when he speaks about the 'putting away' (ἀπόθεσις) of his tent. Again, there is no verbal congruence between Paul and Second Peter in the aspect of unclothing.³⁷ But as current as the idea of the body as a tent or a hut may have been in Antiquity,³⁸

36 Indeed, it is one of his rhetorical devices throughout the letter to repeat the root of a word that he wants to stress, see for example his processed version of Jude 18 in 2 Peter 3:3 where he reinforces the characterization of the teachers with unacceptable doctrines as scoffers by doubling the root of this word: the ἐμπαίχεται who were already mentioned in Jude 18 will, according to his version, come ἐν ἐμπαίγμονῃ.

37 For a more thorough analysis of the vocabulary used and a discussion of the meaning of ἀπόθεσις in Second Peter, see Ruf, *Die heiligen Apostel*, 224–228.

38 The application of the word σκήνος to the human body is attested as early as the fifth century B.C.E., see Ruf, *Die heiligen Apostel*, 224.

it was just as unusual to combine it with the metaphor of undressing and to call dying a 'putting off the tent of the body'.

Another example of the re-use of Pauline phrasing comes from a section towards the end of the letter, immediately before the final exhortation (2 Pet 3:17–18a) and the closing doxology (2 Pet 3:18b). In the corresponding parts of the Pauline letters, one can find greetings and personal remarks about writing and sending the actual letter.³⁹ Greetings are missing in Second Peter, but the theme of letter writing appears in an altered form: The author refers to the *Pauline* letters which, as he says, contain the same message concerning the need for perfect moral behavior during the time until the end of this world and concerning God's patience. Much to the regret of many scholars, Second Peter does not reveal which passages from Pauline letters he has in mind. Instead, two at first sight unimpressive pieces of text in the same verse, which have nothing at all to do with the alleged points of agreement, take up Pauline phrasing.

When mentioning Paul's letter writing, Second Peter labels Paul's letters as written 'with the wisdom given to him': κατὰ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτῷ σοφίαν. Paul, in his letters, refers four times to the 'grace given to him' (ἡ χάρις ἣ δοθεῖσά μοι).⁴⁰ Even though this wording is not a Pauline invention, but is used by others, before and without referring to Paul,⁴¹ he seems to have particularly liked this syntagma with a passive participle of the verb δίδωμι in the aorist. This is shown by the fact that it reoccurs—with some changes—in the deuteropauline Epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians.⁴² Obviously the syntagma was connected to Paul in the minds of his recipients. Hence, it can hardly be seen as mere coincidence when it appears in the immediate context of Paul's name as it does in Second Peter. To someone who knew the Pauline epistles it must have sounded like an allusion to Paul's own words, and the author of Second Peter was aware of this. That 'grace' (χάρις) is changed into 'wisdom' (σοφία) does not disturb the association with Paul. The changes the author of Colossians brought about did not disturb it either. That Second Peter sees 'wisdom' as

39 On letter closing in New Testament epistolary literature see Schnider and Stenger, *Studien zum neutestamentlichen Briefformular*, 71–167.

40 Gal 2:9; 1 Cor 3:10; Rom 12:3; 15:15.

41 See for example 1 Esd 8:6 (κατὰ τὴν δοθεῖσαν αὐτοῖς εὐδοσίαν); Qoh 9,9 LXX (πάσας ἡμέρας ζωῆς ... τὰς δοθείσας σοι ὑπὸ τὸν ἥλιον); Mark 6:2 (τίς ἡ σοφία ἣ δοθείσα τούτῳ;).

42 The author of Colossians changes the subject from 'grace (χάρις) given to me' into 'administration (οἰκονομία) given to me' (Col 1:25) which Ephesians tries to make sound more Pauline by re-integrating 'grace': It is the 'administration of God's grace' (οἰκονομίαν τῆς χάριτος τοῦ θεοῦ) that has been given to Paul (Eph 3:2; cf. 3:9).

God's special gift to Paul, is due to the conviction that Paul's teaching and writing was characterized by divine 'wisdom', a conviction that is displayed by several Early Christian writings.

While this re-use of Pauline phrasing may be seen as a playful way of dealing with Paul's texts, there is another one in the very same verse that includes a statement concerning Second Peter's position towards Paul. Second Peter calls Paul his 'beloved brother' (ὁ ἀγαπητὸς ἡμῶν ἀδελφός). In both, Paul and other New Testament writings, the intended readers are frequently addressed as 'brothers' and sometimes even as 'beloved brothers', which makes this plural quite common in early Christian literature. The singular of the word 'brother', however, has an additional function. When, for example, Paul calls Timothy a brother in the prescript of the letter to Philemon (Phlm 1), it is not only to qualify him as belonging to those who believe in Christ. After all, it is hardly conceivable that Paul would have had a non-Christian co-author. Furthermore, Philemon and the church in his house already know that Timothy is a Christian. Thus calling Timothy a 'brother' has more significance. It highlights Timothy's function as Paul's co-worker. Elsewhere as well, both outside the prescript and in epistolary literature after Paul, such as Colossians, Ephesians and First Peter, 'brother' in the singular applied to a specific, named person has the same meaning. In these cases, 'brother' (ἀδελφός) is often accompanied by the adjective 'beloved' (ἀγαπητός), which underlines the cordiality of the relationship between the apostle Paul and his co-workers. In Second Peter, for the first time, the 'title' ἀγαπητὸς ἀδελφός appears outside Pauline epistolary literature and, for the first time, it is not bestowed by Paul on somebody else, but by somebody else upon Paul. 'Peter' makes Paul his co-worker. Certainly, he is his 'beloved' co-worker whom he appreciates and recommends to be read, but he is a *co-worker* anyway.

Conclusion

The author of Second Peter does not quote. Wherever he is referring to texts and verses, he is surprisingly free concerning the exact wording of a text he alludes to. This liberty can be observed with regard to both groups of texts that are authoritative to him: the texts from Jewish tradition and the early Christian texts. In the case of Pauline texts, he even goes so far as to play with recognizably Pauline ideas and phrases. This freedom, however, does not conflict with the authoritative status of the writings he alludes to. Scriptures, i.e. 'prophets', Jesus tradition and Pauline letters, are the foundation on which Christian doctrine unavoidably has to be based.

More particularly, Second Peter's reception of Paul is marked by aspects of imitation and emulation. By the time the author of Second Peter was writing his letter, Paul's letters had reached the status of literary model. In a way, virtually all New Testament letters are variations on this model, and particularly First Peter can hardly be explained without the background of Pauline letter writing. But in comparison to his alleged forerunner, Second Peter draws even more on the Pauline letters. In the superscription, Second Peter introduces himself as a 'servant and apostle'—just like Paul in Romans. Just like Paul, Second Peter is concerned with the development of doctrine during his absence. And just as for Paul, dying for him means the putting off of his earthly tent. Paul is Second Peter's beloved brother; they have the same message, which is why Paul's letters are absolutely worth reading.

The counterpart of this imitation is emulation. This can also be seen in some sections that could not be treated in this article, for example in the universal address (2 Pet 1:1). Unlike Paul, Second Peter is not only writing to specific churches, but to *all* people sharing in the same faith. More explicitly than Paul, Second Peter intends to leave a *lasting* document so that after his death believers will *always* be able to remember his words. The fiction of a testament in the self-recommendation passage reveals a claim that competes with Pauline self-assertion. Among all Pauline letters, Second Peter chooses Paul's theological legacy, the Epistle to the Romans, as a possible counterpart by using the same combination of titles for himself as Paul does in his superscription to that letter. In order to spread the message of his letter, Second Peter self-consciously and generously elects Paul as his co-worker and underlines the affinity of Paul's teaching. Indeed, the Pauline letters deserve a reception side by side with his own. This is what their elective affinity is about.

Poiesis, Aesthesis, and Catharsis: The Aesthetic Experience of Reading “the Day of the Lord” with the Fathers

Andrew Talbert

It only seems appropriate in a volume dedicated to reception history that we interact, even if only briefly, with the essential founder of this approach to literature, Hans Robert Jauss. Though a well-published scholar with a meticulously detailed hermeneutical methodology for reception history that he described as an “Aesthetic of Reception” (*Rezeptionsästhetik*), this article concentrates on only a minute, yet crucial element of his hermeneutic: the aesthetic experience. From this basic concept, we will expand briefly outward into the larger interpretive endeavor, gleaning insights from the relationship of one’s initial response to a text, in the case of this article 2Thess 1:6–10, to the historical reading of the same by a select sample of the Church Fathers. It is hoped that this exploration of reception history should reveal the dimensions of biblical meaning and encourage stronger ties between the theological disciplines of (at least) biblical studies and Church history. Before proceeding to a discussion of the aesthetic experience and its outflow, an abridged biography of Jauss will familiarise readers with this literary theorist, whom the English-speaking world recognises less frequently than his colleague, Wolfgang Iser.

Following the Second World War, Jauss nurtured a burgeoning interest in both medieval literature and Marcel Proust. He was fortunate to associate with Hans-Georg Gadamer at Heidelberg and, following his studies, Jauss eventually took part in the founding of the University of Konstanz in 1966 and was associated with the university until his death in 1997. At Konstanz, Jauss’ thought matured amongst like-minded scholars who collectively produced a unified theory of reception, with each member of the group emphasizing and developing particular aspects of the theory.¹ The “Konstanz school” could be classified methodologically as reader-response in nature, though it is important to observe its independence from the wide-ranging and fragmented movement that operates under that designation in the United States, and includes the likes of Stanley Fish and Richard Rorty.

¹ For a more detailed background on Jauss, see Anthony C. Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2009), 316–318.

In the collective publication of his earlier essays, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, Jauss demonstrates the profound influence of Gadamer on his thought, as well as his reaction to Adorno's aesthetic of negativity, which reduces aesthetic experience to consumerism. In his second work, *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, Jauss makes these relationships more explicit.² Above all, his relationship to Gadamer is clear in his attention to the history of texts (in both *geschichtlich* and *historisch* terms), the utilisation of the concept of "horizon," the dialogic form of understanding, and a rejection of objectivity that ignores the formative power of history and traditions.³

At the same time, Gadamer has been described as the prelude to Jauss,⁴ for the latter builds upon and distances himself in several key areas from the former. In the first place, Jauss proposes a methodology, the absence of which is a key characteristic of Gadamer's *Truth and Method*.⁵ Secondly, Jauss rejects Gadamer's concept of the "transtemporal classic."⁶ That is, a work of art with the disclosive capacity to *timelessly* reveal its truth. Most significantly for this paper, though, Jauss reasserts the role of aesthetics in hermeneutics; a move that has earned the suspicion of his mentor.⁷ In fact, aesthetics thoroughly permeate his methodology, with the concept of aesthetic experience forming the foundation for his hermeneutics. Gadamer's repugnance to aesthetics is one grounded in a view of *abstracted aesthetic consciousness* that characterized nineteenth century aesthetic education, and would be appropriate if this was the form of aesthetics advocated by Jauss.⁸ Alternatively, Jauss has proposed

2 Hans Robert Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics*, ed. Wlad Godzich and Jochen Schulte-Sasse, *Theory and History of Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), xxxvi. For a more detailed critique of Adorno, see 13–21. Adorno's aesthetic experience is one of abstraction, which does not cohere with Gadamer's or Jauss' emphasis on the manner in which history and traditions shape the way in which we respond to texts.

3 Thiselton, *Hermeneutics: An Introduction*, 317.

4 David Paul Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, Princeton Theological Monograph Series (Princeton: Pickwick Publications, 2009), 2.

5 It has frequently been noted that the "and" in *Truth and Method* ought to be taken adversely. Again, Jauss' likely reflects his debt to Gadamer in his article "History of Art and Pragmatic History," in which he pits the two concepts at odds.

6 Ormond Rush, *The Reception of Doctrine*, Serie Teologia (Rome: Gregorian University Press, 1997), 83.

7 Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience*, xxxvi–xxxvii; Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, 166–168.

8 Abstracted aesthetics, according to Gadamer, allows for "unlimited play." Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel C. Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 72; See also Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, 166–168.

an aesthetically-guided hermeneutic that remains faithful to the notion of history's formative role on the reader, even in a reader's aesthetic response to a text or work of art.

The phrase "aesthetic response" should alert us to another difference between the work of Gadamer and Jauss. The former promulgated the concept of *Wirkungsgeschichte*, or "effective history," while the latter developed *reception* history. Jauss clarifies the distinction between these two approaches to literature by noting, "*effect* is the name given to the element of concretization determined by the text, while *reception* is the element determined by the person to whom the text is addressed."⁹ Together, their distinct hermeneutical trajectories can be classified under the broader designation of "reception theory."¹⁰

1 Aesthetically Perceptive Reading

As one primarily concerned with the readerly response to a text, Jauss construes this in terms of the aesthetic experience. This phrase has been freely employed thus far without providing a clear definition of how Jauss understands it. His fundamental hermeneutical interest extends to the modern reader's ability to enjoy and respond to historically distant texts. This idea of "enjoyment" underlies the aesthetic experience of his aesthetic of reception. For Jauss, the initial response of the first reading of a text, a reading he describes as "aesthetically perceptual,"¹¹ is decidedly aesthetic by the very nature of the reading process. By participating in the text, the reader "enjoys" his/her submersion in the "other;" in "something that does not resemble the ordinary world, but points

9 Hans Robert Jauss, "The Theory of Reception: A Retrospective of its Unrecognized Pre-history," in *Literary Theory Today*, ed. Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Ryan (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), 60; Jauss describes as essential to the hermeneutic task that effect and reception "be distinguished, worked out, and mediated if one wishes to see how expectation and experience mesh and whether an element of new significance emerges." Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience*, xxxii.

10 Holub offers this definition. Robert C. Holub, *Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction*, ed. Terrence Hawkes, New Accents (London: Methuen, 1984), xi–xii; Funke would certainly want a finer distinction, however, as "reception theory" (*Rezeptionstheorie*) was the designation utilised by a contemporary literary movement to Jauss developed in the GDR. Mandy Funke, *Rezeptionstheorie-Rezeptionsästhetik* (Bielefeld: Aisthesis-Verlag, 2004).

11 Hans Robert Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, ed. Wlad Godzich and Jochen Schulte-Sasse, *Theory and History of Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), 139.

beyond everyday experience.”¹² In this initial stage of performing the text, the text itself sets the boundary for the reader’s attention until the reader switches to the role of observer. This amounts to a change from pre-reflective to reflective reading. In the pre-reflective stage, the reader enjoys the text as “other.” In the reflective movement, the reader recognises personal correspondences within the text and the concretization for potential, present meaning takes place.¹³ A reader approaches any given text with an expectation shaped by their previous aesthetic experience with other texts as well as their cultural context. When, therefore, a new text diverges widely from their expectations, that is, when it is *aesthetically distant*, the new aesthetic experience necessitates a shift in their expectations with which they will approach the next piece of literature or that same text when reread. In illustrating the nature of the aesthetic experience in the first reading of a text, Jauss speaks of it in the three classical modes of *poiesis*, *aesthesis*, and *catharsis*, concepts that he borrows and develops from Aristotelian aesthetics and further development on the philosophy of art in Plato, Augustine, Rousseau, and Kierkegaard.¹⁴

Poiesis

Poiesis, in an aesthetic of reception, is understood as the productive aspect of the aesthetic experience.¹⁵ Historically, the productive force behind a work of art has been understood primarily or exclusively as the artist or author. This view, however, thrives only in an aesthetics of production and representation rather than in an aesthetics of reception and influence.¹⁶ In Jauss’ reception history, the reader functions as a constructive energy in producing meaning in the triangle of author, work, and reader.¹⁷ As the productive aspect of the aesthetic experience, “*poiesis* involves the active participation of the reader

12 Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience*, 5.

13 Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, 159.

14 Jauss does not embrace Aristotelian aesthetics, but uses his categories to develop his Rezeptionsästhetik (with a qualification of aesthesis). Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience*, 34–47; Jauss’ method is decidedly more complex than the aesthetic experience, but it provides a helpful entry point for discussing the project. For a summary of his hermeneutics, see Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 3–45.

15 Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience*, 46.

16 Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 20–22.

17 “Im Dreieck von Autor, Werk, und Publikum ist das letztere nicht nur der passive Teil ... sondern selbst wieder eine geschichtsbildende Energie.” Hans Robert Jauss, “Literaturgeschichte als Provokation der Literaturwissenschaft,” in *Rezeptionsästhetik*, ed. Rainer Warning, Uni-Taschenbücher (München: Willhelm Fink Verlag, 1979), 127.

in constructing the aesthetic object.”¹⁸ Put differently, in the act of reading and understanding, the reader constructs the text mentally in a manner that renders it coherent. In *poiesis*, “the reader recognizes the work’s identity as an authentic voice and not as a mere manufactured voice”¹⁹ that originates outside of them. During or after this mode of the aesthetic experience, *aesthesis* comes into play.

Aesthesis

If *poiesis* is the productive side of the aesthetic experience, *aesthesis* is the receptive dimension of the same. “*Aesthesis* is the pleasure that comes from seeing and recognizing. It is the knowledge that we learn from the possibilities that we realize in reading the text.”²⁰ *Aesthesis* is appreciation and enjoyment of a text that is shaped by one’s present understanding of literature. It is not abstracted pleasure, but “an understanding that is pleasure, and a pleasure that is cognitive.”²¹ One appreciates a work in relation to his/her contemporary horizon of expectations, which is created by aesthetic experience.²² This aesthetic understanding *with reference to something* prevents it from becoming an abstraction. Additionally, the reader is led along by the text in which they perceive “a horizon of experience belonging to a world viewed differently.”²³

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- 18 Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, 168; Elsewhere, Jauss aptly describes this distinction of *poiesis* from Aristotelian aesthetics as liberating “aesthetic reception from its contemplative passivity by making the viewer share in the constitution of the aesthetic object: *poiesis* now means a process whereby the recipient becomes a participating creator of the work.” Hans Robert Jauss, “*Poiesis*,” trans. Michael Shaw, *Critical Inquiry* 8, no. 3 (1982): 603; Rush adds, “Each reception is itself a new work of production by the receiver.” Rush, *The Reception of Doctrine*, 73; Iser puts it somewhat differently and implicitly introduces a concept of limitation to meaning in interpretation in noting that “it is generally recognized that literary texts take on their reality by being read, and this in turn means that texts must already contain certain conditions of actualization that will allow their meaning to be assembled in the responsive mind of the recipient.” Wolfgang Iser, *The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980), 34.
 - 19 Michael Eckert, “Hermeneutics in the Classroom: An Application of Reception Theory,” *The CEA Critic* 46, no. 3–4 (1984): 9.
 - 20 Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, 168.
 - 21 Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience*, xxix.
 - 22 Hans Robert Jauss, “Tradition, Innovation, and Aesthetic Experience,” *The Journal for Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 46, no. 3 (1988): 387.
 - 23 Eckert, “Hermeneutics in the Classroom,” 10.

An example of *aesthesis* with regard to the reception of Scripture can be illustrated in the possibilities of meaning realized in a first reading of 2 Thessalonians. The reader recognises its form as a letter, establishing relationships between its form and content, and that of other Pauline epistles, or other letters from the Greco-Roman era. The full-fledged apocalyptic timeline stands out sharply from the majority of the Pauline literature. Furthermore, its verbal similarities to 1 Thessalonians demonstrate an early rereading and reconfiguration of the first epistle by the apostle himself.²⁴ The passage of particular interest for our discussion, 2 Thess 1:6–10,²⁵ presents a worldview shockingly different from reality as perceived. The text describes a scenario in which Divine justice is executed on those who have persecuted the faithful and who have wilfully rejected God. *Aesthesis*, in reading this Scripture, involves submission to and “inhabiting” the world projected by the text.

Catharsis

Catharsis mediates between *poiesis* and *aesthesis*.²⁶ Whereas *poiesis* involves the construction of the aesthetic object and *aesthesis* involves the pleasurable recognition of possibilities in that object, *catharsis* is “the assent to a judgment demanded by the work.”²⁷ Put differently, “the way in which the disclosure and recognition of [the possibilities realized in the text] transforms the reader’s self-understanding, changes her beliefs, and liberates her mind to consider new perspectives on the world is the function of *catharsis*.”²⁸ The

24 This is not the occasion to discuss the question of pseudonymity and the author proceeds with the assumption that 2 Thessalonians is an authentic letter of Paul. For positions toward pseudonymity with which the author is sympathetic, see Armin D. Baum, *Pseudepigraphie und literarische Fälschung im frühen Christentum: mit ausgewählten Quellentexten samt deutscher Übersetzung*, vol. 138, WUNT 2 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001); and Terry L. Wilder, *Pseudonymity, the New Testament, and Deception: An Inquiry into Intention and Reception* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2004).

25 “For it is indeed just of God to repay with affliction those who afflict you, and to give relief to the afflicted as well as to us, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will suffer the punishment of eternal destruction, separated from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might, when he comes to be glorified by his saints and to be marveled at on that day among all who have believed, because our testimony to you was believed.” (2 Thess 1:6–10, NRSV)

26 Rush, *The Reception of Doctrine*, 76.

27 Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience*, 35.

28 Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, 168.

work demands a modification of one's present horizon of understanding, and *catharsis* is the response.

It is crucial to Jauss' hermeneutics that the reader not proceed with understanding a text by bypassing the aesthetic experience and immediately pursuing the historic meaning of the text, perhaps through the excavatory means of historical-critical scholarship that dominates modern biblical studies. In so doing, one delimits the questions that can be asked of a text from the present context, thereby contracting the potential field of meaning. Jauss encourages historical-critical work, which can help reveal whether one has posed a legitimate question to a text, though not until the second or third levels of reading in his aesthetics of reception.²⁹

2 Retrospectively Interpretive Reading

Following the initial, aesthetic reading of a text, Jauss perceives a second stage of reading that marks the transition from understanding to interpretation. "What the reader grasps in the first aesthetically perceptive reading is reflected upon in the second reading."³⁰ Those aspects that drew the reader's attention in the aesthetically perceptual stage concretised possibilities of meaning. In this reflective reading, the reader transitions from participant in the text to observer. The aesthetic experience in the first reading constitutes the primary act of understanding. The second reading, therefore, is grounded in this aesthetic experience, but moves from the general aesthetic reading to specific attention to the parts of the text. In interpretive reading, the reader enters into dialogue with the text, posing questions to which the text offers answers. This reveals the nature of meaning as it relates to texts: "the meaning of a text is not a pre-given timeless commodity. Instead, the meaning of a text is defined according to the performance of the text by a reader at both the first and second levels of reading."³¹ This is not to say that a text can never have "the same" meaning, but rather that meaning is actualised within the temporal horizon and "timeless" (as "beyond time") meaning is not something to which we have access.

29 It is important to bear in mind that these three functions are not easy to distinguish temporally, nor are they arranged hierarchically. Rather, they form "a nexus of independent functions." Jauss, *Aesthetic Experience*, 35; Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, 168.

30 Parris, *Reception Theory and Biblical Hermeneutics*, 160.

31 Ibid., 161.

3 Historical Reading

Jauss' third and final level of reading entails the reconstruction of the original horizon of expectations of the text under consideration as well as the history of readings of that same text. By coming to terms with the original horizon of expectations, the reader "prevents the text from the past from being naively assimilated to the prejudices and expectations of meaning of the present,"³² thereby preserving its otherness. By looking at the historical receptions of the text in terms of their synchronic moments of arising and in the diachronic stretch of the text's full history, the reader also sees the historical questions posed to the text that have generated a number of historical meanings. At the same time both the historical-critical and the reception history of the text stand as a challenge to the modern reader's understanding of the text. Providing a framework within which they must consider whether they have posed a legitimate question to the text, or whether they have forced a reading upon the text and destroyed its integrity as "other."

Though we are interested in the historical-critical reading of 2 Thess 1:6–10, such a reading is less helpful in the dimension of textual application. Anyone interested in such a reading can easily pick up one of dozens of critical commentaries on the epistle. Of more interest to our discussion is the historical reception of 2 Thess 1:6–10 and the trajectories of meaning that have flowed out of the text. We turn to that shortly, but first, it is advisable to reassert the place of aesthetics and aesthetic experience in this discussion.

Dual Aesthetic Experiences

Together, the three movements of *poiesis*, *aesthesis*, and *catharsis* encapsulate Jauss' aesthetic experience, but his aesthetic of reception actually entails two aesthetic experiences. We have already noted the modern reader's aesthetic experience, which is crucial, because it is in this experience that the concretization of the text and potential meaning takes place. The second aesthetic experience of interest to Jauss is that of the original audience in which the historically distant text arose. Admittedly, *experiencing* the actual aesthetic experience of the original audience is impossible, as that would entail the ability to remove oneself from one's historical context. At the same time, however, recreating the original horizon of expectations through knowledge of contemporary literature and historical context aids in registering the *aesthetic value* of a text in its appearance and preservation. It also simu-

32 Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 146.

lates³³ the aesthetic experience of the original audience and can restore a sense of shock, confrontation, provocation, or agreement with which they met the text.³⁴ Therefore, Jauss advocates a reception history that explores historical concretizations of a text in terms of both synchrony and diachrony. By taking a synchronic cross-section of literature, say, at the time that Chrysostom wrote his homilies on 2 Thessalonians, one can gauge the aesthetic value of his contribution at the moment of its appearance, recreating the aesthetic experience, and then situate it diachronically in the history of reading 2 Thessalonians in order to map the trajectories that the text has taken in its “post-history.” This method also reveals when “epochal moments” of interpretation entered the history of a text.

Bringing together these two aesthetic experiences (i.e. of the modern reader and the simulated experience of the historically distant reader) into one hermeneutical venture is significant for several reasons. Most importantly, it discloses the reasons behind particular exegetical emphases and historical readings of a text. In coming to terms with the motivations for questions posed to texts that generate certain meanings, we can learn to ask better and broader questions of Scripture. In the case of biblical exegesis, for example, interacting with pre-modern exegetes, such as the Church Fathers, can help us to move beyond the historical-critical dialogue that dominates many modern commentaries, as well as any singularizing notion of meaning, so that we can ask and integrate more theologically-oriented questions into our exegesis. Beyond these questions, Jauss emphasizes that an aesthetic of reception reaches its goal when the judgment demanded by the work enters the horizon of the reader, *preforms* their understanding of the world, and affects their social praxis.³⁵ The reader who remains unaffected by the demands of the text is, as C.S. Lewis describes, the “unliterary reader,”³⁶ who forgets that s/he, and not the text, is under judgment (a reality that is particularly true for the reader of Scripture).³⁷ Though

33 “Simulates” is an appropriate, though perhaps thorny term. It helps to make clear that the modern reader *does not have the same* the aesthetic experience of the original audience, because the recreation of that experience still occurs in their modern horizon. At the same time, an aesthetic experience takes place.

34 This is a crucial element to Jauss’ third thesis for Rezeptionsästhetik: “The way in which literary work, at the historical moment of its appearance, satisfies, surpasses, disappoints, or refutes the expectations of its first audience obviously provides a criterion for the determination of its aesthetic value.” Jauss, *Toward an Aesthetic of Reception*, 25.

35 Ibid., 39.

36 C.S. Lewis, *An Experiment in Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), 38.

37 See Stephen I. Wright, “An Experiment in Biblical Criticism,” in Craig Bartholomew, Colin

this may appear to conflate the concepts *Wirkungsgeschichte* with *Rezeptionsästhetik*, it is important to recognise that, for Jauss, the contextually-shaped question that the reader brings to a text *always* precedes the answer given by the text.³⁸ The text may say abundantly more than initially asked, but it does so in response to a question. Therefore we see not a conflation of the reception theory concepts, but rather their connection. Furthermore, Jauss' reception history considers the circumstances that gave rise to the readerly questions, the way in which historical receptions provoked the horizon of expectations of readers, and he maps out diachronically the history of a text so that historical questions can be taken up in the modern horizon of understanding for both a fuller understanding of a text under consideration and so as to help modern readers ask better questions of a text. This "map" displays an aesthetically appealing mosaic of the text's historical meanings.

Turning our theory in the steps toward praxis, then, we look at an initial, aesthetic response to the reading of "the Day of the Lord" from 2 Thess 1:6–10 and then direct our attention to readings of the same by several of the Fathers, who use the text specifically in response to varieties of Gnosticism. The goal of the latter will be primarily to gauge the aesthetic experience of the original audience, rather than working through the *poiesis*, *aesthesis*, and *catharsis* of the Fathers themselves. This should offer a picture of the aesthetic value of such readings and demonstrate the depth of meaning that such a text offers in shifting historical contexts.

4 2 Thess 1:6–10: An Aesthetic Experience³⁹

In the process of performing 2 Thess 1:6–10, one recognises its location within the epistolary genre as a segment of a larger letter. It comprises part of the pri-

Greene, and Karl Möller, eds., *Renewing Biblical Interpretation*, vol. 1, The Scripture and Hermeneutic Series (Carlisle: Paternoster, 2000), 243.

38 Qualifying both Gadamer and Jauss, Pannenberg insists that more room must be made in their hermeneutics to allow for assertions. This is a valid critique, the exploration of which should be attended elsewhere. Wolfhart Pannenberg, *Basic Questions in Theology*, ed. George H. Kehm, trans. Paul J. Achtemeier, vol. 1 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1970), 125.

39 Jauss offers a biblical example of charting the aesthetic experience with regard to Gen 1–3 and Job. Hans Robert Jauss, *Question and Answer: Forms of Dialogic Understanding*, ed. Wlad Godzich and Jochen Schulte-Sasse, *Theory and History of Literature* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 95–118.

mary thanksgiving and precedes any exhortations. The opening phrase “since indeed” (ἐῴπερ; 1:6) indicates a connection with the previous verse(s), which is further sealed by Paul’s discussion of God’s justice and impending vindication. The passage concentrates on the fate of non-believers in the eschatological scheme (1:6–9), though it culminates in an apocalyptic dualism by introducing the fate of the saints, in whom the Lord will “be glorified” (1:10). Admittedly, the phrase “the Day of the Lord” does not appear in this passage, but the language of selection is characteristic of such a discussion and the text leads to this specific phrase at the beginning of the second chapter. The “Lord Jesus” (1:7) functions as the agent of God’s wrath on this Day, inflicting vengeance not primarily on those who have abused the Thessalonians Christians, as one would anticipate the argument should proceed (cf. 1:5–6). Instead, the Lord inflicts vengeance on those rebellious toward God (which naturally includes the Thessalonians’ persecutors). Again, the view of punishment on the wicked does not cohere with reality as perceived, thereby inviting the reader to participate in the world projected by the text. Given the pluralistic tendencies of the West, this text is shockingly provocative. In this mixed process of *poiesis*, *aesthesis*, and *catharsis* one comes to an *understanding* of the text.

As we shift to the interpretive stage of reading, the reader poses questions in response to their aesthetic experience of the text, in which meaning-potential has been concretised. How is one to construe the relationship of Jesus to God, given that the “Lord Jesus” inflicts vengeance “on those who do not know *God* and on those who do not obey the gospel of our *Lord Jesus*” (1:8)? That is to say, whose honour has been offended? Furthermore, how ought one understand the phrase ὀλεθρος αἰώνιος (i.e. “eternal destruction” or “age-long destruction”; 1:9), and what will become of the dimension of time following “that Day?”

Having offered a modern sample of the aesthetic experience and recognising some questions that arise from this horizon in order to yield present meaning, it would be remiss to neglect engagement with the historical readings of this passage. Given our own limits temporally, socially, culturally, etc., we pose questions from within an unrecognised set of parameters. In order to expand these parameters and consider the text’s larger meaning, we turn to the history of interpretation. It is hoped that, in this process, we disclose the aesthetic value of historical readings of 2 Thess 1:6–10 and that we might simulate the aesthetic experience of the first readers of such texts.

Irenaeus

One of the earliest readings of 2 Thess 1:6–10 comes to us through Irenaeus in Book IV of *Against Heresies*. Clearly writing against a strain of Gnostic theology, Irenaeus constructs a thoughtful argument advancing the point that the sins

of the ancients were recorded in Scripture for our instruction, to stem pride in our own lives, for we witness the wrath of God against such sin. Furthermore, this God is the very same preached by Christ, which should generate a fearful response toward sin in the Christian, because of the increased degree of wrath articulated by Christ. Not exile, but eternal condemnation is the consequence of sin. After listing numerous OT and NT scriptures to confirm the consistency of the God of the OT with the Father of the NT, Irenaeus concludes by quoting 2 Thess 1:6–10. The text serves as a challenge to those who exaggerate the mercy of God at the expense of a robust doctrine of hell.⁴⁰ In a context where 2 Thessalonians serves as a resource for homilies or liturgical reading, Irenaeus' reading is provocative, to say the least. By extracting only this portion of the epistle, he sharpens its point. Incorporating the early Church emphasis on vices, in this case pride, Irenaeus reveals a larger, canonical reading of Scripture and the concern of the end to which such vices lead, even though the term "pride" does not appear in 2 Thessalonians.

Given its relocation in a textual genre, namely an apology, and the plethora of purposes for which it is used, Irenaeus' reading registers a high aesthetic value. The experience of the first readers of this text would not have matched their expectations of a reading of 2 Thess 1:6–10 and would, therefore, have resulted in a horizon expansion. Here, Joel Green's comment is fitting: "Scripture-formed patterns of thinking and acting might take different shapes—not because the words of Scripture have changed, but because the social contexts within which those words are put into play vary."⁴¹ Since the dialogue partners are no longer Paul and the Thessalonian Christians, but instead Irenaeus and the Gnostics, the historical meaning of the passage has not changed. Rather, both readings see the text from appropriately Christian perspectives without doing it violence.

Tertullian

Tertullian pursues a similar path as Irenaeus, but against the named adversary, Marcion. Like Irenaeus, Tertullian utilizes 2 Thessalonians to show that the God of the OT and the NT are the same. In a manner different from Irenaeus, Tertullian concentrates on two crucial points related to our passage. In the first

40 Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 4.43, ed. W.W. Harvey, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Typis Academicis, 1857), 244. Irenaeus adds to this a second reading of the passage in which he blends a doctrine of the certainty that Christians must suffer for their belief and the promised nature of Christ's second advent. See Irenaeus, *Adversus Haereses* 4.55, 264–265.

41 Joel B. Green, *Seized by Truth: Reading the Bible as Scripture* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2007), 20.

case, it appears Marcion has erased portions of 2 Thessalonians, including the phrase “flaming fire” from the section under discussion. Tertullian, therefore, defends it as sacred literature that cannot be treated such wilful contempt. Secondly, Christ coming in judgment as the Lord in markedly the same manner as the God of the OT forces Marcion into a difficult position. The difference between Irenaeus’ reading and that of Tertullian is that Tertullian asserts *Jesus’* role as the Christ of God the Father, who is the Creator God of the OT, or else he must be the Antichrist of the demiurge, if we follow Marcion’s logic. He formulates a stronger argument against Gnostic heresy with 2 Thessalonians.⁴² In terms of the original aesthetic experience, this does not have a high aesthetic value, because it carries forward what Irenaeus began, though it renders the point more precisely and receives the text in reaction to a specific impulse, namely Marcion. The expectations of the first readers, who would have had *Against Heresies* as their base text, would have a different experience with Tertullian’s text and, therefore, their horizons would have to enlarge in order to incorporate Tertullian’s reading.

Augustine

Our final early Church example comes from Augustine’s *Treatise on Grace and Free Will*. Like Tertullian, Augustine has a specific Gnostic as his intended target: Valentinus (and the monks with him). While considering the potential of pleading ignorance as a legitimate excuse to allow sinners to escape judgment, Augustine appears to distinguish between those who refuse to know the commandments of God and those who are ignorant because they have not heard the message necessary for salvation. He comes down harder on those who refuse the truth; pointing to the fact that refusal is an act of the will. Nevertheless, Augustine notes that the ignorance of the other does not allow them to escape the punishment of fire, but only to mitigate their punishment. He enlists 2 Thess 2:7–8 as a means of confirming his reading, in that when the Lord returns in flaming fire, he will “inflict punishment on those who do not know God.”⁴³ Like Irenaeus, Augustine offers an aesthetically distant text in terms of the original horizon of expectation. He poses the theodical question of what will happen to the ignorant on the Day of the Lord and finds his answer in 2 Thessalonians. His reading comes in specific response to the theology of Valentinus, who would have held the opposite position and, perhaps like his predecessors, removed 2 Thess 1:6–10 from his canon.

42 Tertullian, *Adversus Marcionem* 5.16 (CCSL 1:710–712).

43 Augustine, *De gratia et liber arbitrio* 3.5 (PG 44:884–885).

The reading is a difficult one, provocative in its own context, and clashes with certain readings of the same passage. In the present context, Ben Witherington, for example, asserts precisely the opposite. The ignorant are those who *wilfully* refuse to acknowledge God.⁴⁴ The task of an aesthetic of reception is not to immediately rule out readings that provoke our modern horizon, but to undergo the aesthetic experience that results in reading the text, situate it in the broader reception history of the text, and consider whether Witherington and Augustine have posed legitimate questions to the same text. Even should we determine that a certain reading is incorrect, our understanding of the passage will always be formed with reference to that incorrect reading as incorrect.

With all three Fathers, we witness the impulses that shape their reception of 2 Thess 1:6–10. Gnosticism provides them the questions with which they approach the Scripture. Admittedly, the text provides the answer, but *only in response to a question* generated in their historical context. Thus we see the interaction of effect and reception in their readings.

5 Conclusion

The aesthetic experience forms the foundation of understanding any text. In our contemporary setting, we see how it manifests with regard to Scripture in the movements of *poiesis*, *aesthesis*, and *catharsis*. When looking at historical receptions of a text, we cannot experience the original aesthetic experience, though we can simulate the aesthetic experience of the original receptive audience and, in looking at works both in relation to their contemporary literature and in the grander diachronic view of a text's history, we can register the aesthetic value of a text in terms of its distance from previous interpretations. Hopefully, this exercise has demonstrated the importance of aesthetics for reception history specifically and contemporary biblical studies more generally.

Thinking of reception history purely in terms of cataloguing readings of a biblical passage fails to fully capture the formative power of Scripture. Rather, these readings must be allowed to have their aesthetic effect, to be taken up in our horizons, shape our outlook and questions, preform our understanding, and affect our social praxis. *Rezepstionästhetik* does not offer all of the answers to the fractious nature of theological studies. Indeed, it has its own

44 Ben Witherington III, *1 and 2 Thessalonians: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2006), 195–196.

set of problems. Nevertheless, reception history reveals the importance, yet insufficiency of historical-critical study of Scripture on its own⁴⁵ and holds the potential promise of reintegrating the theological disciplines of biblical studies, systematic theology, and Church history through the dimensions of history and meaning, and it offers a more holistic approach to engaging with Scripture.

45 So with Barth: "Aber nicht die historische Kritik mache ich ihnen zum Vorwurf ... sondern ihr Stehenbleiben bei einer Erklärung des Textes, die ich keine Erklärung nennen kann, sondern nur den ersten primitiven Versuch einer solchen." Karl Barth, *Der Römerbrief* (Munich: Chr. Kaiser, 1933), x.

The Reception of Paul's Understanding of Resurrection and Eschatology in the Epistle to Rheginos: Faithful Paulinism, or Further Development?¹

Frederik S. Mulder

1 Introduction

One of the remarkable finds of the Nag Hammadi collection is *The Epistle to Rheginos* (Rheginos) also known as the *Treatise on the Resurrection*. It is an anonymous and probably a late-second-century letter, from a teacher to his student, Rheginos, who has specific questions about the resurrection.² In his letter, the author draws heavily on several Pauline³ themes and imagery, integrating, re-applying (and/or altering?) them. Ever since the text, which is a Coptic translation of an original Greek text,⁴ has been analysed and scrutinised, the main area of interest has been to determine whether Rheginos represents a

1 A large portion of this paper is based on research I conducted under John M.G. Barclay while studying in Durham (2008/9). Apart from his valuable comments and recommendations, Peter J. Williams and Michael R. Licona have also made valuable suggestions. All extant mistakes are mine.

2 Malcolm L. Peel, *The Epistle to Rheginos. A Valentinian Letter on the Resurrection* (London: SCM Press, 1969), 180; contra Mark J. Edwards, *The Epistle to Rheginos: Valentinianism in the Fourth Century* (Novum Testamentum XXXVII, Leiden: Brill, 1995), 76.

3 “Paul” is used in full knowledge of the varying opinions about which letters are the so-called genuine, and deuterio-Pauline letters. Whatever conclusions modern scholars have about this, Francis B. Watson “Resurrection and the Limits of Paulinism” in *The Word Leaps the Gap: Essays on Scripture and Theology in Honour of Richard B. Hays* (ed. J. Ross Wagner; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2008), 462, indicates that “deuterio-Pauline” is of no significance for the early history of interpretation, for which these are Pauline texts.”

4 My English translations will be informed by the translations of Peel, *Rheginos* (n. 2); Bentley Layton, *The Gnostic Treatise on Resurrection from Nag Hammadi*, Harvard Theological Review (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1979); and Hugo Lundhaug, ““These are the Symbols and Likenesses of the Resurrection”: Conceptualizations of Death and Transformation in the *Treatise on the Resurrection* (NHC I, 4),” in *Metamorphoses: resurrection, body, and transformative practices in early Christianity* (ed. Turid Karlsen Seim and Jorunn Økland; Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009).

legitimate and “proto-orthodox”⁵ canonical Pauline interpretation, or whether there are indeed significant (or even radically divergent) developments which move beyond relatively obvious canonical Pauline parameters.

Scholars have been greatly divided over this issue resulting in radically opposing interpretations.⁶ “[T]his text is an impressive and creative re-enactment of fundamental Pauline concerns,” says Francis Watson.⁷ Similar is Mark Edwards who says that Rheginos “is not a product of accretion, but a coherent meditation on Pauline teaching.”⁸ Bentley Layton on the other side of the fence, is of the opinion that the biblical similarities, “are parallels of language, rarely touching upon fundamental structures of ... [Paul’s] ... thought.”⁹ In the same vein, N.T. Wright states that Rheginos “[r]einterpret[s] ‘resurrection’ language so that it now,” encompasses something “it had never done before, in Judaism, paganism or early Christianity.”¹⁰

In this paper, I will analyse and compare aspects of Rheginos and Paul’s understanding of (1) the resurrection body, and (2) eschatology. As for the first, my aim will be to demonstrate that Rheginos’ understanding of a $\sigma\omega\mu\alpha\ \pi\epsilon\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon$ -

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- 5 By using this term, I follow Larry Hurtado who popularised it in his monograph *Lord Jesus Christ. Devotion to Jesus in Earliest Christianity* (Grand Rapids, Mich., and Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans, 2003). In short, Hurtado argues that proto-orthodoxy spanning roughly from 70–170 ca was simpler and more flexible than the developed orthodoxy of the fourth century and beyond (563–564).
 - 6 With the possible exception of Peel, who has a more nuanced position. So for instance he states that Rheginos is generally not so esoteric as to demand constant appeal to Valentinian parallels. Rheginos is much closer to Paul except, perhaps, for his understanding of realised eschatology (Peel, *Rheginos* [n. 2], 105).
 - 7 Although Watson also states that Rheginos is constructed in “an idiom and a conceptuality that do not exactly reproduce Paul’s own,” he states time and again how the author remains “faithful” to Pauline interpretation. Even when Rheginos supposedly moves beyond Pauline parameters, it seems that Watson not only sympathises with the author, but tries to argue that the “Pauline texts are clearly open to such reading[s],” criticizing more “orthodox” interpreters like Tertullian, Augustine and Calvin (Watson, *Paulinism* [n. 3], 463).
 - 8 Edwards, *Rheginos* (n. 2), 76.
 - 9 Layton’s historical approach to Rheginos has led him to integrate previously untapped sources (including, amongst others, Clement of Alexandria; the Platonic corpus; and at a social - scientific level, “roughly contemporary funerary inscriptions found all around the Mediterranean basin”) (Layton, *Resurrection* [n. 2], 5).
 - 10 Later N.T. Wright states it even stronger: “It is impossible to conceive that talk about a ‘resurrection,’ in the sense used by Rheginus ... should be anything other than a late and drastic modification of Christian language” (*The Resurrection of the Son of God* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2003), 538, 550).

ματικόν, acquired through Christ's victory over death is somewhat similar to Paul. This body will be incorruptible, transformed, heavenly, spiritual, but *also* corporeal. However, I will argue that Rheginos' emphasis on (a) resurrection as gnosis (through the thoughts and minds of the elect) over against the body; (b) his negativity towards the cosmos; (c) the complete absence of Paul's interlocking between resurrection and new creation; and (d) his anthropological dualism exemplified by a radical discontinuity between the material earthly body, and a spiritual heavenly flesh, strengthens the argument that his understanding of the resurrection body moves beyond the canonical Paul, in these matters.

As for eschatology, my aim will be to demonstrate that Rheginos, like Paul, believes in a realised eschatology (which urges the faithful to abstain from fleshly desires, partaking in the spiritual resurrection now), as well as a future eschatology (hoping and waiting for resurrection after death). However, the apparent absence of (a) the expected Parousia; (b) Rheginos' understanding that Christians ascend into heaven immediately after death; and (c) Rheginos' exclusive anthropological construal of eschatology, create difficulties for the notion that Rheginos stays within canonical Paul parameters, in these matters.

My paper will be structured as follows: Firstly, an overview of the letter is given; secondly I discuss the resurrection body (first arguments in favour of, and then against faithful Paulinism); thirdly I discuss eschatology (first arguments in favour of, and then against faithful Paulinism); and fourthly my conclusion and results.

2 Overview

The author to Rheginos starts off by highlighting the importance of the resurrection. It is indeed necessary, but is not believed by many who are "faithless" (ἀπιστος). Jesus, being both Son of God and Son of Man (possessing humanity and divinity), overcame death and thereby restored man's standing with God. He "swallowed up" (ὤμικ) death and put aside the world which is perishing. He transformed himself into an imperishable Aeon (παῶν) and raised himself up, having swallowed the visible by the invisible. Quoting the "Apostle," the author states that "we have suffered with him, and we arose with him, and we went to heaven with him." Following death, we are drawn into heaven (τῆς) like beams by the sun.

This is what the author calls the "spiritual resurrection" (τὰ νῆστασις νῆνευ-
ματικῇ), which "swallows up" (ὤμικ) the "psychic" (τῆ ψυχικῇ) in the same way

as the “fleshly” (τσαρκική) (45:39–46:2). It is the “thought of those who are saved” (πνευματικοῦ), and the “mind of those who are saved” (πνευμάτιος) that “shall not perish” (οὐκ ἀπολείπει). Only those who believe, are immortal and elect unto salvation (predestined from the beginning). They are not destined to fall into the folly of the ignorant. The author assures Rheginos that he should not have any doubts about the resurrection, for if he did not “(pre-) exist in flesh” (ὡς ἄνθρωπος ... ἐν σαρκί), he received flesh when he came into this world. Why shall he then not receive flesh again when he ascend into “the aeon?” (47:8). It is then that the text indicates that Rheginos wants to learn what he lacks. To this the author replies: “The afterbirth of the body (παιδίον τοῦ σώματος) is old age, and you exist in corruption” (47:17–19). The body will be left behind (47:34–45). But, as some ask questions about whether the redeemed after death will be further saved, the author assures Rheginos that there is no reason to doubt; the “living members” within them, but not “the visible dead members” (μέλη ζῶντα ἀλλὰ καὶ νεκρά) (47:38–48.1), will indeed be saved! But “[w]hat is the resurrection?” For the author it is “always the uncovering (ἀποκάλυψις) of those who have arisen” (48:2–6). To explain this statement further, he refers to the Transfiguration story,¹¹ which ‘proves’ that the resurrection is not a fantasy or illusion. “It is no fantasy (φαντασία), but it is the truth! Indeed, it is more fitting to say that the world is a fantasy (or illusion), rather than the resurrection ...” (48:12–16). Thus, the resurrection is indeed “the revelation of what is, and the transformation of things, and a transition into newness” (48:34–38). It is this “newness” which relates to the imperishable, which descends upon the perishable, “the light flows down upon the darkness, swallowing it up; and the Pleroma fills up the deficiency” (49:1–5). Rheginos must therefore cease to think in part, “neither live in conformity with this flesh (συνέμοιχεν τῇ σαρκὶ κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας)” (49:11–12) as “already you [Rheginos] have the resurrection” (49:15–16). With this in mind, Rheginos shall, through “practice” be “released from this element, that he may not fall into error but shall himself receive again, what at first [he] was” (49:33–36). The author concludes by stating that he received this teaching from his Lord Jesus Christ, and passes it on in its entirety. As for some obscurities, he will give further explanation, should Rheginos ask.

11 A rearrangement of the Markan version.

3 Resurrection Body

3.1 *Resurrection Body—Arguments in Favour of Faithful Paulinism*

Peel, Edwards and Watson believe that Rheginos's understanding of the resurrection body is a "reasonably faithful" interpretation of the Pauline view. In fact, Peel and particularly Watson believe it to be even *more* faithful than that of many of the heresiologists of early Christendom.¹² Quoting Charlie Module, Peel adds that, against these early heresiologists (and with Rheginos in mind), "... Paul steered a remarkably consistent course between, on the one hand, a materialistic doctrine of physical resurrection and, on the other hand, a dualistic doctrine of the escape of the soul from the body."¹³ Like Paul, Rheginos apparently rejects both, too. Peel believes that, in a "rather Pauline fashion," Rheginos teaches that the resurrection body, while retaining some "identifiable personal characteristics" by which the earthly flesh was recognizable, is actually a new, spiritual body.¹⁴ Two phrases in Rheginos are important here. Firstly with reference to the flesh: "For if you did not exist in flesh, you received flesh when you entered this world. Why (then) will you not receive flesh when you ascend into the Aeon?" (47:4–8). This understanding, Peel believes informs and becomes a hermeneutical key for Rheginos' understanding of the resurrection body, which is clearly deducible from 45:39–46:2 where he states: "This is the spiritual resurrection which swallows up the psychic alike with the other fleshly."¹⁵

Following Peel, and following the above two excerpts from Rheginos, Watson claims that here, Rheginos "develops the Pauline concept of a 'spiritual resurrection' and rejects the (Platonic?) 'physical' resurrection and the (catholic) 'fleshly' one (*TR* 45:39–46:2)."¹⁶ Substantiating this claim, Watson refers to 1 Cor 15:44–46 which, importantly, argues for a *σῶμα πνευματικόν* over against a *σῶμα*

¹² Watson, *Paulinism* (n. 2), 462.

¹³ Charlie F.D. Moule, "St. Paul and Dualism: The Pauline Concept of Resurrection," *NTS* 12 (1966), 106–123 in Peel, *Rheginos* (n. 2), 148–149.

¹⁴ Peel, *Rheginos* (n. 2), 149. As for "identifiable personal characteristics," the author to Rheginos in 48:3–11, utilises the transfiguration story of the Gospels (focusing on, and rearranging the Markan version) to indicate, that the resurrection is not only tangible, yet spiritual following death, but also supplying proof that the resurrection will in fact take place! (147).

¹⁵ Peel does concede that if 1 Cor 15:44 did in fact inspire Rheginos, "he gave it a twist with the use of 'flesh' which is not Pauline" (Peel, *Rheginos* [n. 2], 83, cf. 147).

¹⁶ Watson, *Paulinism* (n. 2), 456. Some errors in this direct citation from Watson was brought to my attention by John Barclay.

ψυχικόν. For Watson, the author to Rheginos is a “faithful student of Paul” in this regard.¹⁷ Hugo Lundhaug made a similar remark recently when he judged that Rheginos is in “conscious agreement” with Paul in 1 Cor 15:44.¹⁸

With both Rheginos (45:39–46:2; 47:4–8) and 1 Corinthians 15 in mind, Edwards indicates that the spiritual view of the resurrection was canonized by none other than Paul himself. To expound this further, Edwards refers to 1 Cor 15:45 where Paul explicitly contrasts the people of the spirit with the psychic, whose nature was still corrupted by the Fall. In 2 Cor 3:6, *that* carnal knowledge is rejected, which ensnared the ignorant in the toils of death. The eternal things are invisible, and the “corruptible body,” which is sown in the earth by burial, would be raised a σῶμα πνευματικόν (1 Cor 15:42–44, 54 etc). The wickedness of the psychic man is therefore native to the σάρξ, as is clear in i.e. 1 Cor 15:50 where Paul declares that flesh and blood (σάρξ καὶ αἷμα) cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable (φθαρτὸν) inherit the imperishable (ἀφθαρσίαν) (cf. Rom 7:18 etc.).

If this spiritual rather than psychical understanding is Pauline, then Bart Ehrman shows how, in agreement with Paul, Rheginos is certainly correct that the resurrection will not involve a “crass revivification” of the material body. Rather, after death, a person’s spirit will ascend heavenward, drawn up by Jesus (cf. “we are drawn to heaven by him like the beams by the sun” in Rheginos 45:36–38). For Ehrman, “[t]he flesh, in other words, is completely transitory, but the spirit is eternal.”¹⁹ But then again Lalleman rightly mentions the other side of the coin, when he indicates that for Rheginos (and also for Paul), a corporeal aspect of the resurrection is *not* denied, but the identity between the present fleshly body and the future spiritual body is denied.²⁰

All this is, for the author of Rheginos, acquired through the Saviour, Jesus Christ, by destroying death and the perishable:

17 Watson, *Paulinism* (n. 2), 456. See also 2 Cor 5:4 and 2 Cor 4:16, in relation to Rheginos 47:38–48:3.

18 Lundhaug, *Symbols* (n. 2), 205.

19 Bart D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures. Books that did not make it into the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 207. As Michael R. Licona informed me, it is however important to note that in the 2008 edition of Ehrman’s *Introduction to the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), he states that “there is no doubt that [Paul] believed that he saw Jesus’ real but glorified body raised from the dead” (301).

20 Pieter J. Lalleman, “The resurrection in the Acts of Paul,” in *The Apocryphal Acts of Paul & Thecla* (ed. Jan N. Bremmer; Kampen: Kok Pharos Publishing, 1996), 140.

The *Saviour swallowed up death*—(of this) you are not reckoned as being ignorant. For He put aside the world which is perishing. He transformed [himself] into an imperishable Aeon and raised himself up, having *swallowed the visible by the invisible*, and He gave us the way of our immortality.

45:14–23

And later:

For imperishability [descends] upon the perishable; and the light flows down upon the darkness, *swallowing it up*; and the Pleroma fills up the deficiency. These are the symbols and the images of the resurrection.²¹

48:38–49:7

Gerd Lüdemann, Peel and Watson concur that here we have expressions undoubtedly drawn from Paul, particularly as is evident in the Corinthian letters. Two important examples will do:

When the *perishable/ corruptible* (φθαρτόν) has been clothed with the *imperishable/ incorruptible* (ἀφθαρσίαν), and the *mortal* (θνητόν) with *immortality* (ἀθανασίαν), then the saying that is written will come true: “Death is *swallowed up* (Κατεπόθη) in victory”.

1 Cor 15:54

Second example:

For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed but to be clothed with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be *swallowed up* by life (ἵνα καταποθῇ τὸ θνητόν ὑπὸ τῆς ζωῆς).²²

2 Cor 5:4

With these remarkable similarities between Paul and Rheginos in mind, it seems quite appropriate to conclude that for both of them, death is a transi-

²¹ My emphasis.

²² Gerd Lüdemann, *Heretics. The Other Side of Early Christianity* (Stuttgart: Radius Verlag, 1996), 132; Peel, *Rheginos* (n. 2), 121; Watson, *Paulinism* (n. 2), 458. Peel shows further how the “swallowing up” image, has a long Old Testament usage denoting divine punishment or natural destruction. Isa 25:8, which is the particular text used by Paul in 1 Cor 15:54, is especially similar to our author’s thought (Peel, *Rheginos* [n. 2], 121).

tional stage from *mortality* to *immortality*, from *visible* to *invisible*, from *perishable* to *imperishable*, from *psychical* to *spiritual*. All this is the result of the Saviour who swallowed up death, thereby securing our immortality.

To sum up, a provisional first thesis: Rheginos, like Paul, believes in a spiritual resurrection, acquired through Christ's victory over death. This resurrection body encompasses some kind of personal continuity between the earthly and heavenly spheres. Both have a body, radically distinct from each other however, with the latter being immortal, incorruptible, transformed, heavenly, spiritual, but also corporeal.

3.2 *Resurrection Body—Arguments against Faithful Paulinism*

Wright makes the emphatic claim that for Rheginos, resurrection is reinterpreted in such a way, so that it now, encompasses something "it had never done before, in Judaism, paganism or early Christianity."²³ This, Wright holds, is due to what he believes to be Rheginos's rejection of bodily resurrection.²⁴ Layton concurs that "the treatise promises no more than the immortality of the soul."²⁵ Given the earlier discussed Pauline parallels to Rheginos, how do these scholars come to such conclusions?

In his exhaustive commentary on Rheginos, Layton indicates that from 43 up until 45:39 (roughly the first quarter of the letter), Rheginos relies on, and faithfully expounds traditional Christian imagery to explain resurrection. But, and this is the key, as the letter progresses, he is of the opinion that Rheginos rejects the Pauline notion that the body must share in the resurrection state.²⁶ After 45:39 in particular, the author increasingly relies upon essentially philosophical and Platonizing conception(s) of salvation, which eventually (and inevitably) leads to a rejection of the Pauline notion that the body must share in the resurrection state.²⁷

Whereas in 46:7, the author still cleverly makes maximum concession to traditional modes of speaking (as a reference to 1 Thess 4:16), Layton believes the correlation to be deceptive, as in what follows, belief in *gnosis* of the truth is

²³ Wright, *Resurrection* (n. 10), 538.

²⁴ Although disagreeing on other matters, James M. Robinson agrees with Wright that Rheginos does not proclaim a future bodily resurrection ("Jesus from Easter to Valentinus (Or to The Apostles' Creed)," in *The Sayings Gospel Q: Collected Essays* [ed. James M. Robinson, Christoph Heil and Jozef Verheyden; BETL 189; Leuven: Peeters Publishers, 2005]), 146.

²⁵ Layton, *Resurrection* (n. 2), 79.

²⁶ Layton, *Resurrection* (n. 2), 67.

²⁷ Layton, *Resurrection* (n. 2), 67, 77, 86.

what really counts (cf. 46:19 ff.).²⁸ This special knowledge (encompassing the *thought* and *mind* that will not perish) is brought to its full meaning when in 49:35 the author proposes that they will "receive again what at first was," or as Layton translates it, one's "former state of being." This leads Layton to conclude that Rheginos is not primarily concerned with salvation (encompassing a spiritual resurrection) which begins after death, but rather with the recovery of disembodiment while the person is still incarnate.²⁹ Layton goes further to show how, for Rheginos, the notion of resurrection as a concrete future event is substantially devalued (49:9 ff.) in favour of eschatology in which *ipso facto* the mind (*nous*) is an entity that is, or can be, undying. Within this framework, Layton believes that resurrection cannot be said to occur after death or even at death, except insofar as it is the imperishable mind's physical sloughing off of a body: "... he shall be released from this Element so that he may not be misled but shall himself receive again what at first was" (49:33–36).³⁰

If these conclusions are reasonable and valid, then it gives explanatory power to Wright's assertion that,

If [as in Rheginos] the language of resurrection is retained, it is reinterpreted so that it no longer refers in any sense to the bodily events of either ultimate resurrection or moral obedience in this life, but rather to non-bodily religious experience during the present life and/or non-bodily post-mortem survival and exaltation. This point [is underscored] by observing the difference between metaphorical meaning of "resurrection" language in ... (Romans 6, Colossians 2–3, etc.) and metaphorical meaning in the *Epistle to Rheginos*.³¹

Wright makes this statement after discussing some deviations in Rheginos, which are, for him, essential to Pauline resurrection thought, terminology and language. The first relates to the important Pauline interlocking between resurrection and new creation. Wright shows how Paul's treatment of resurrection, always includes and builds upon a theology of new creation (cf. i.e. 1Cor 15; Rom 8; Phil 3:20–21). In Paul the goodness of the original creation in Genesis 1–3, of which Jesus' resurrection is seen as the fulfilment, the celebration, and the crowning glory, is maintained.³² One could add that these themes are not

28 Layton, *Resurrection* (n. 2), 20, 21, 68.

29 Layton, *Resurrection* (n. 2), 72–73.

30 Layton, *Resurrection* (n. 2), 67.

31 Wright, *Resurrection* (n. 10), 547.

32 Wright, *Resurrection* (n. 10), 541. Cf. Layton, *Resurrection* (n. 2), 74.

just maintained, but pivotal for Paul!³³ With this in mind Wright argues that Rheginos has something else in mind when he states that, “It is more suitable to say, then, that the world is an illusion rather than the resurrection which came into being through our Lord the Saviour Jesus Christ ... The world is an illusion” (48:13–19, 27–28).³⁴ Here one finds a radical separation between two inseparable Pauline parts! Rheginos speaks of the cosmos in deprecating terms. In fact, Zandee believes there is reason to interpret Rheginos’s illusionary depiction of the world going to a much deeper level: in its origin, the world is already a mistake.³⁵ Similarly Peel indicates that, according to Rheginos, the world is indeed not a purposeful creation but apparently a cosmic mistake, which is not a sphere to be redeemed, but a sphere from which to escape.³⁶

Thus (and rightly so), any idea that the present world is an illusion, and that “resurrection” is to be found by escaping it in the present or future is (even if resurrection of a heavenly “flesh” is supposedly retained), according to Wright, “totally foreign to Paul.”³⁷ In Paul’s mind, Jesus’ resurrection gave birth to a cosmic eschatology in which the world of space, time and matter would ultimately not be thrown away. Similarly Peel indicates that Rheginos’ negative evaluation of the “world” and the corruptible body of “flesh” does in fact result in a metaphysical and anthropological dualism which goes beyond Paul’s view.³⁸

Connected to the above anthropological dualism could probably also be the *meaning* Rheginos attaches to *σῶμα πνευματικόν* (1 Cor 15:42–44) as well as *σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα* in 1 Cor 15:50. Although disputed, a growing number of New Testament biblical scholars (cf. Richard B. Hayes, N.T. Wright, Michael R. Licona,³⁹ Roy E. Ciampa, Brian S. Rosner, Anthony C. Thiselton etc.) regard 15:42–44 not

33 In his exposition of 1 Cor 15, Wright states emphatically: “there can be no doubt that Paul intends this entire chapter to be an exposition of the renewal of creation, and the renewal of human kind as its focal point” (Wright, *Resurrection* [n. 10], 313).

34 See also 46:35–39.

35 Jan Zandee, “Gnostic Ideas on the Fall and Salvation Author,” *Numen* 11 (1964), 29–30.

36 Peel, *Rheginos* (n. 2), 146.

37 Wright, *Resurrection* (n. 10), 541. See also Layton who states: ‘In our text the body and all creation are a negative factor in the mind’s drive towards the return (to its former state). There is in fact no reference at all to the creation of the universe except to note that unlike the metaphysical world it came into being: there was a time when it was not’ (Layton, *Resurrection* [n. 2], 131–132).

38 Peel, *Rheginos* (n. 2), 149. See also Wright, *Resurrection* (n. 10), 548.

39 Michael R. Licona, in his 2010 monograph: *The Resurrection of Jesus. A New Historiographical Approach* (Nottingham: Apollos / Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2010), 410 (n. 450), adds Alan F. Johnson (2004), 304–405; Craig S. Keener (2005), 132; Kirk R. McGregor (2006), 233; Kevin Quest (1994), 96; and Nigel Watson (1992), 176.

as Paul contrasting the *substance* of the earthly body with the resurrected body, but rather a contrast between the *orientation* and *mode of existence* of a natural, earth-bound, corruptible body, with the resurrection body that will be incorruptible, immortal and under the guidance of the Spirit.⁴⁰ Thus, Paul is dealing with orientation and not substance, something not found in Rheginos (especially after 45:39 where a Platonizing anthropology is evident; cf. 49:9 ff.).

Rheginos' understanding of "ascending into the Aeon" also goes beyond Paul. It is true that Paul talks about wanting to be away from the body and with the Lord in Phil 1:22–23 and 2 Cor 5:6–8. However, Paul always balances such statements with the importance of the body. In both Phil 3:20–21 and 2 Cor 5:10 the ultimate significance of the body, even beyond death is maintained which is not the case in Rheginos.⁴¹ Paul's disagreement with Rheginos on this issue is fairly obvious:

For our citizenship is in heaven from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will transform our lowly body (τὸ

40 Licona conducted a rigorous historical investigation and word study about these issues spanning from the 8th century B.C. through to the 3rd century A.D. Interestingly, in *none* of the 846 occurrences Licona found did ψυχικόν possess a meaning of "physical" or "material." Of the 1131 occurrences of πνευματικόν, never did it refer to ethereal bodies (with one possible exception) (Licona, *Resurrection* (n. 39), 408).

With regards to 1 Cor 15:50 Licona indicates that despite continued debate, recent scholarship has shown that Paul is not developing a radical dualism between a material and spiritual resurrection body here. Although James D.G. Dunn and A.J.M. (Sandy) Wedderburn (and a "significant minority") claim that Paul is actually contradicting Luke 24:39 here, a significant majority of scholars agree that σὰρξ καὶ αἷμα is not a synonym for "physical," but a figure of speech—and probably a Semitism (Licona, *Resurrection*, 417–418). Also significant is the fact that in none of the New Testament occurrences of the phrase (cf. Matt 16:17; 1 Cor 15:50; Gal 1:16; Eph 6:12 and Heb 2:14) does it refer to the physical body. It is mortality that is in view.

41 The recent disagreement between Wright and Markus Bockmuehl about bodily resurrection and *going to heaven* in Paul is important (cf. Markus Bockmuehl, "Did St. Paul Go to Heaven When He Died?" in *Jesus, Paul and the People of God: A Theological Dialogue with N.T. Wright* [ed. Norman Perrin and Richard B. Hays; Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic / London: SPCK, 2011]), 211–234. Their disagreement does not really impact on the real issue in Rheginos, for even Bockmuehl accepts that for all of the apostolic fathers, going to heaven in Paul, did not result in rejecting bodily resurrection—the latter being the case in Rheginos. My personal conversation with Bockmuehl on 27 May 2011 in Cambridge confirms this. I understood Bockmuehl to say that we don't have to become Platonists or Gnostics to believe in bodily resurrection *and going to heaven when we die*. The most important texts for this debate is undoubtedly Phil 1:20–24 and 2 Cor 5:1–8.

σῶμα τῆς ταπεινώσεως), that it may be conformed to His glorious body (τῷ σῶματι τῆς δόξης αὐτοῦ), according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Phil 3:20–21

For we must all appear before the judgement seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body (διὰ τοῦ σώματος), according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

2 Cor 5:10

If, therefore, some phrases in Rheginos give the impression of bodily resurrection, what that *means*, is, according to some scholars, removed from its meaning in Paul.

In summary, a second thesis relating to the resurrection body: The preference of the mind over against the body; the negative stance toward the cosmos; the absence of Paul's interlocking between resurrection and new creation (i.e. 1 Cor 15; Rom 8, Phil 3:20–21); and his radical anthropological dualism espoused by his understanding of σῶμα πνευματικόν, strengthens the argument that Rheginos's understanding of the resurrection body, is moving beyond Paul's understanding thereof.

4 Eschatology

4.1 *Eschatology—Arguments in Favour of Faithful Paulinism*

One of Rheginos's main features (and/or debated issues) is the tension between the “already” and the “not yet,” the resurrection *now*, and the resurrection *after* death, the realised eschatology and the still future eschatology at the Parousia. Of course, all of these themes are classically Pauline,⁴² and, according to some, although this is disputed, faithfully presented in Rheginos. So, for instance, Rheginos states:

... as the Apostle said, ‘We *suffered with him*, and we arose with him, and we went to heaven with him.’⁴³ Now if we are revealed in this world wearing

42 While, of course keeping in mind the ambiguities surrounding Paul's initial imminent expectation of the Parousia (1 Thess 4:15–18 and 1 Cor 15:51–54), and his eventual development thereof (Phil 1:22–23 and 2 Cor 5:8–9) (cf. Richard N. Longenecker, *Studies in Paul. Exegetical and Theological* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2004]), 216–225.

43 As for *already* going to heaven, Lüdemann states that it continues to be worth noting that

him, we are that one's beams, and we are enclosed by him *until* our setting, that is to say, our death in this life. We are drawn to heaven by him like the beams by the sun, not being restrained by anything. This is the spiritual resurrection.⁴⁴

45:24–40

The similarities with Eph 2:5–6 is striking: (God) made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions ... And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus (see also Col 2:12).⁴⁵ Full blown realised eschatology, just as in Rheginos (45:24–40; 47:30–48:1). And then, as for an eschatological reserve, 2 Cor 4:14 states: He who raised up the Lord Jesus *shall* raise us up also by Jesus, and *shall* present us with you (see also 1 Cor 15:51–55; 1 Thess 4:15–17). Again, remarkably similar to Rheginos 45:34–35, which emphasizes that “we are enclosed by him *until* after death.”

Peel is correct to state that the resurrection and ascension are, therefore, for both Paul and Rheginos, those saving events in Christ's experience which serve as the firm and already realised, but also anticipatory, promise of the believers' own hope of rising and going to heaven.⁴⁶ The elect are *already* dead, but have *not yet* physically died; they are *already* resurrected, but that resurrection is *not yet* fully consummated.⁴⁷ A closer resemblance to the eschatological tension found in Eph 2:5–6; Col 2:12; 2 Cor 4:14 etc is probably not possible?

Another instance where Rheginos and Paul converge is when Rheginos confesses “We have known the Son of man, and we have believed that he rose from the dead” (46:14–17). It is within this interim period between Christ's resurrection and our own that Rom 6:11 states that we should consider ourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. The latter is faithfully developed by Rheginos by insisting that “... neither live in conformity with this flesh for the sake of unanimity, but flee from the divisions and the fetters, and already you have the resurrection” (49:11–16). This leads Watson to make the emphatic

Paul knows of a temporary transportation into heaven as 2 Cor 12 indicates (Lüdemann, *Heretics* [n. 22], 133).

44 My emphasis.

45 For Colossians, see John M.G. Barclay, *Colossians and Philemon* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2004), 26.

46 Peel, *Rheginos* (n. 2), 136.

47 Peel, *Rheginos* (n. 2), 152.

suggestion that “here, and throughout his letter, the author to Rheginos shows himself to be the Apostle’s faithful disciple.”⁴⁸

Also in support of a legitimate Pauline reception is Lundhaug who recently argued that baptism (as Paul develop its significance in Rom 6:4–7; cf. also Rom 8:17 and Eph 2:6) as well as “wearing Christ” (Gal 3:27—where baptism is connected with putting on Christ) could provide us with a possible background to Rheginos’ claim that “already you have the resurrection” (49:16; cf. also 45:24–28).⁴⁹

To sum up, a provisional thesis: The author to Rheginos, like Paul, believes in a realised eschatology (which urges the faithful to abstain from fleshly desires, partaking in the spiritual resurrection now), as well as a future eschatology (hoping and waiting for resurrection after death).

4.2 *Eschatology—Arguments against Faithful Paulinism*

Despite undoubted and significant realised and future eschatological parallels in Rheginos (cf. 45:24–40; 46:14–17; 47:30–48:1; 49:11–16) with Paul (cf. Col 2:12; Eph 2:5–6; 1 Cor 15:51–55; 2 Cor 4:14; 1 Thess 4:15–17; Rom 6:11), there are indeed scholars who find sufficient grounds for further debate.

For Peel, the assumption that Rheginos is “faithful” to realised eschatology in Paul is tempered by the fact that nowhere in his letter, is eschatology connected to the primitive Christian community’s imminent eschatological expectation.⁵⁰ Dying and rising with Christ (in Paul) receives its final confirmation in the Parousia when the dead in Christ shall be resurrected (unto life, and those outside him unto destruction). PHEME PERKINS puts this emphatically when she insists that without an apocalyptic (future) vision that includes both destruction of evil and death on the one hand, as well as the transformation of the righteous, “Paul’s convictions make no sense.”⁵¹ In Rheginos, however, this

48 Watson, *Paulinism* (n. 3), 461, rejects the claim that here, one could find an “over-realized eschatology,” which is mentioned in 2 Tim 2:17–18.

49 Lundhaug does however acknowledge that it is impossible to know whether the author intended this particular interpretation (Lundhaug, *Symbols* [n. 2], 202).

50 Ryan Craig, “Anastasis in the Treatise on the Resurrection: How Jesus’ Example Informs Valentinian Resurrection Doctrine and Christology” in *Resurrection of the Dead. Biblical Traditions in Dialogue* (eds. Geert van Oyen and Tom Shepherd; Leuven; Peeters, 2012), 475–496, says that on this point Rheginos “deviates slightly in its reflection on 1 Cor 15 ... The emphasis here is on a present spiritual *resurrection* present spiritual *union* with future eschatological consequences” (492–493).

51 PHEME PERKINS, *Gnosticism and the New Testament* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 1997), 85, 92.

orientation of eschatological hope (looking forward to the Parousia) has disappeared when one evaluates his actual understanding of being already risen now (49:22–30). What finally gives Rheginos' deviation from Paul away is found in 45:34–39, where he indicates that death is the only portal to immediate post-mortem ascension (something never taught by Paul, unless one chooses to interpret Phil 1:21–23 as an escape to heaven).⁵²

But how are we to deal with a text like Eph 2:5–6, in which it is clearly stated that we have *already* been raised up, and *already* sit in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus? Are we not to follow Watson when he states that the “objectionable non-literal interpretation of death and resurrection stems from the apostle's own language,” and that, “throughout his letter, the author to Rheginus shows himself to be the Apostle's faithful disciple”?⁵³ Lüdemann will not accept such a claim, for he believes that in Ephesians, the resurrection is part of an event which transcends the individual,⁵⁴ whereas in Rheginos, resurrection is exclusively an anthropological-Christological event, without theology in the real sense.⁵⁵

Similarly, and expounding this subject further, Wright shows how, counter to Paul's consistent insistence on a concrete reference when dealing with realised eschatology, Rheginos, when using “resurrection” as a metaphor, uses it to denote a “specifically *non-concrete* state of affairs: the abstract (or ‘spiritual’ in the Platonic sense) elevation of the soul during the present life and/or after death.”⁵⁶ This is indeed a critical distinction between Paul and Rheginos, as for Paul, the realised eschatology is always connected to still future concrete events including the Parousia, when Christ will return. Eph 2:5–6, can therefore

52 Peel, *Rheginos* (n. 2), 137.

53 Watson, *Paulinism* (n. 3), 457, 463.

54 Cf. A.J.M. (Sandy) Wedderburn, who acknowledges the emphatic realized eschatology in Col 2:12; 3:1 and Eph 2:6 but maintains, however, that these letters “still preserve elements of a future expectation” (*Beyond Resurrection* [London: SCM Press, 1999]), 163.

55 Lüdemann, *Heretics* (n. 22), 134. Against Watson, who states that “‘Paulinism’—the hermeneutical privileging of the Pauline texts—is *always* characterized by [this] anthropocentric bias towards the present, so that every statement about Jesus the Son of God must demonstrate its value *pro me*” (*Paulinism* [n. 3], 467, my emphasis). And also “In Paul ... the process of abstracting the event (God raising “Jesus of Nazareth” on Easter Day [cf. Acts 4:10]) from its particularity is already far advanced, for only so can the identities of Christ and his own be assimilated to one another” (469).

56 Wright, *Resurrection* (n. 10), 548. *Contra* Watson, who emphatically states that the author to Rheginos “rejects the (Platonic?) ‘physical’ resurrection and the (catholic) ‘fleshly’ one (TR 45:39–46.2)” (Watson, *Paulinism* [n. 3], 456).

not be read in isolation, but needs to be read in a broader context which will include Eph 1:13–14, and 4:30 in which a future and concrete eschatology (at the Parousia) is maintained. With this as background, Luther Martin provides us with a valuable and probable summary of Rheginos' epistemological difference with Paul:

Over against the dualistic cosmology of the phenomenal, sensory world ... [Rheginos] places the "Truth" of that which is within ... (47:26 ff.). This embodied All stands in ontological continuity with the Pleroma, the hyper cosmic reality. The monistic presupposition requires an *a priori* ontological continuity between fallen *beings* and *Being*. This monistic ontology is the metaphysical presupposition of ... [Rheginos] for a "realized" soteriological possibility, the spiritual resurrection (45:39–46:2), which Rheginos already has (49:9–36).⁵⁷

A second thesis, relating to eschatology: The apparent absence of the expected Parousia, the immediate ascension after death, and the exclusively anthropological construal of eschatology, create difficulties for the notion that Rheginos is Paul's faithful servant in his endeavour to explain a realised and still future eschatology.

5 Conclusion

Anyone reading this fascinating letter to Rheginos can be forgiven for seeing in it a purely and remarkably faithful interpretation of canonical Pauline concepts such as a spiritual resurrection and realised/ not yet eschatology.⁵⁸ The sophistication with which Pauline parallels (particularly in 1 Cor 15) are articulated is indeed staggering. But once the literary analysis is combined (and enriched) with historical (and thus, more diachronic) possibilities, the literary structure, and, therefore, the exclusively immanent reading become ambiguous. I name three examples:

57 Luther H. Martin, "The Anti-philosophical Polemic and Gnostic Soteriology in 'The Treatise on the Resurrection' (CG I, 3)," *Numen* 19 (1973), 37.

58 It should be made clear that Watson cannot really be placed in this category, as, for him, the Epistles should be read within their canonical context, which include the Gospels. The latter balances out an anthropological orientation found in the Epistles (Watson, *Paulinism* [n. 2], 471).

- i. It is unlikely that Rheginos can claim Paul as his sole mentor when the resurrection he envisages (which, apparently includes a heavenly "flesh"), articulates the kind of resurrection, in which gnosis (through thought and mind) is developed over against the body.
- ii. It is unlikely that Rheginos can claim Paul's approval for articulating resurrection language which devalues creation (deeming it an illusion or fantasy).
- iii. It is unlikely that Rheginos can claim to be Paul's faithful servant when final judgement (at the Parousia) is completely absent when articulating realised and future eschatology.

The evidence discussed in this paper would suggest that Rheginos does present us with a highly skilful articulation of important Pauline themes. Within the context of the canonical Pauline Epistles as a whole however, Rheginos has moved beyond what Paul would have allowed for.

Consensus on these matters are a long way off, but it should be acknowledged that as for the notion that the author of the Epistle to Rheginos is Paul's faithful servant, at the very least, several questions and ambiguities remain.

Nicetas of Heraclea's Catena on John's Gospel: How Many Manuscripts are There?

Michael A. Clark

1 Introduction

Nicetas of Heraclea (born ca. 1060 CE) was a prolific author of secular and theological works, including several biblical catenae.¹ His catena on John's Gospel has received little scholarly attention of any kind and has never been edited or published. To begin studying the text, then, one must go directly to the manuscripts containing it; identifying these manuscripts, though, is not a straightforward matter. Consulting the works of Caspar René Gregory, Hermann Freiherr von Soden, and Joseph Reuss yields a combined list of ten manuscripts said to contain Nicetas. Yet out of these ten there are only three manuscripts on which all these scholars agree. The present article examines and compares these ten manuscripts to determine which of them actually contain Nicetas's catena of John.²

2 The Manuscripts

Below are all witnesses Gregory, von Soden, and Reuss claimed contain Nicetas's catena on John's Gospel.³

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- 1 For a brief introduction to Nicetas and his works, see Karl Krumbacher, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur von Justinian bis zum Ende des Oströmischen Reiches (527–1453)* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1897), 280–281; Hans-Georg Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (München: C.H. Beck, 1959), 651–655 (an updated version of Krumbacher's work); Bram Roosen, "The Works of Nicetas Heracleensis (ὁ τοῦ Σεργῶν," *Byzantion: Revue Internationale des Études Byzantines* 69, no. 1 (1999): 119–144.
 - 2 This article is concerned only with the text itself and does not address whether or not Nicetas actually made the catena attributed to him. There does not, however, seem to be any reason to doubt that he did.
 - 3 The following information on these manuscripts is found at Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, *NTVMR Liste* (Münster: n.d.), <http://ntvmr.uni-muenster.de/liste>.

Gregory-Aland (GA) 249—Contents: John, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: XII; Material: Parchment; Leaves: 808; Columns: 1; Lines: 30; Height: 31 cm; Width: 23.5 cm; Location: State Historical Museum, Moscow (Russia); Shelf Number: v. 90, s. 93.

GA 317—Contents: John, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: XII; Material: Parchment; Leaves: 352; Columns: 1; Lines: 29; Height: 32.7 cm; Width: 23.6 cm; Location: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (France); Shelf Number: Gr. 212.

GA 333—Contents: Matthew and John, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: XIII; Material: Paper; Leaves: 377; Columns: 1; Lines: 40–50; Height: 33.7 cm; Width: 26; Location: Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria di Torino, Turin (Italy); Shelf Number: B.1.9.

GA 423—Contents: Matthew and John, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: XVI; Material: Paper; Leaves: 1041 (Jn 465; Mt 576); Columns: 1; Lines: 30; Height: 33.9 cm; Width: 23.7 cm; Location: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (Germany); Shelf Number: Cod. graec. 36 (John); Cod. graec. 37 (Matthew).

GA 430—Contents: John, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: XI; Material: Parchment; Leaves: 366; Columns: 1; Lines: 24; Height: 29 cm; Width: 22 cm; Location: Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Munich (Germany); Shelf Number: Cod. graec. 437.

GA 743—Contents: John, 1–3 John, and the Apocalypse, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: XIV; Material: Paper; Leaves: 401; Columns: 1; Lines: 35; Height: 39.7 cm; Width: 27.7 cm; Location: Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris (France); Shelf Number: Suppl. Gr. 159, fol. 2–7.12–406.⁴

GA 841—Contents: Mark, Luke, and John, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: xv; Material: Paper; Leaves: 244; Columns: 1/2; Lines: 31–36; Height: 29.7 cm; Width: 22.5 cm; Location: Biblioteca Estense, Modena (Italy); Shelf Number: G. 178, a.v.7.24 (II F 13).

GA 869—Contents: John, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: XII; Material: Parchment; Leaves: 245; Columns: 1; Lines: 25; Height: 28 cm; Width: 22 cm; Location: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City; Shelf Number: Vat. gr. 1996.

GA 886—Contents: Gospels, Acts, Paul, and the Apocalypse, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: xv; Material: Paper; Leaves: 336; Columns: 1; Lines: 59; Height: 34.6 cm; Width: 24.5 cm; Location: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vatican City; Shelf Number: Reg. gr. 6.⁵

4 There is a note for 743: "Auf fol. 8–11 von anderer Hand Ap 3,1–4,8 wiederholt (= 2419)." Ibid.

5 There is a note for 886 as well, that reads, "Auf dem Mikrofilm fehlen die Folien 183r/v, 184r/v und 207r/v." Ibid.

GA 1178—Contents: Gospels, with commentary; Language: Greek; Century: XIII; Material: Parchment; Leaves: 451; Columns: 1; Lines: 34; Height: 31 cm; Width: 22 cm; Location: Joannu, Patmos (Greece); Shelf Number: 203.

Gregory's catalogue of New Testament manuscripts says 249 and 317 contain commentary but does not specify the type, and identifies as Nicetas 333, 423, 430, 743, 841, 886, and 1178.⁶ According to Reuss, 317, 423, 430, 743, and 869 all contain Nicetas. He qualified his inclusion of 743, however, noting that it contains an altered text form with anonymous commentary excerpts added in the margins.⁷ Von Soden categorizes 249, 317, 333, 423, 430, and 743 as Nicetas, 841 and 886 as Theophylact, and 1178 as Zigabenus. GA 869 falls under the heading of "Catenae of unknown origin."⁸

3 Methodology

Three manuscripts, namely 333, 423 and 430, were considered for the standard against which to judge if the others contained Nicetas, since these three have extant titles attributing the text to Nicetas. In addition, Reuss, von Soden, and Gregory all agree that 423 and 430 contain the catena in its normal form (unlike 743, as mentioned above). Gregory and von Soden agree that 333 contains Nicetas as well, but Reuss makes no mention of the manuscript. Because of its age, 430 is given priority, but it is unfortunately incomplete, breaking off after Jn 8.14, and so another witness is necessary as well. 333 initially seems to be the better choice for the remaining text as it is older than 423, and in fact textual and paleographical evidence suggests that 333 is the exemplar of

6 Caspar René Gregory, *Textkritik des neuen Testamentes* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1900), 172, 179, 180, 188, 189, 218, 226, 229, 245 (page numbers are listed in the same order as the manuscripts discussed, both here and below). Gregory's list is somewhat ambiguous, in that some manuscript entries mention a "catena" of Nicetas, and others a "commentary" of Nicetas. Because the most recent catalogue of Nicetas's works (Roosen, "Works") mentions no commentaries on John other than the catena discussed here, Gregory presumably uses "catena" and "commentary" interchangeably in these instances.

7 "Unser Codex enthält die Niketas-Katene zu Jo. aber nicht in reiner Form, sondern erweitert durch zahlreiche anonyme Scholien am Rand." Joseph Reuss, *Matthäus-, Markus-, und Johannes-Katenen nach den handschriftlichen Quellen untersucht*, Neutestamentliche Abhandlungen 18,4–5 (Münster: Aschendorf, 1941), 204–207.

8 "Katenen unbekannten Ursprungs." Hermann Freiherr von Soden, *Die Schriften des neuen Testaments*, vol. 1 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1913), 261, 269, 262, 258.

TABLE 1 *Manuscript Identifications of Gregory, Reuss, and von Soden*

GA No.	249	317	333	423	430	743	841	869	886	1178
DATE	XII	XII	XIII	XVI	XI	XIV	XV	XII	XV	XIII
Gregory	Commentary	Commentary	Nicetas	Nicetas	Nicetas	Nicetas	Nicetas	Catena	Nicetas	Nicetas
Reuss		Nicetas		Nicetas	Nicetas	Nicetas		Nicetas	Theophylact	
Von Soden	Nicetas	Nicetas	Nicetas	Nicetas	Nicetas	Nicetas	Theophylact	Catena	Theophylact	Zigabenus

423.⁹ Yet despite the availability of excellent color images of 333, extensive damage and a compact script combine to make it quite difficult to read. In addition, estimating the number of words is complicated by inconsistency in the number of lines to a page, which varies from 40 to 50. Thus 423 is the better choice for the present purposes, even though it is a later manuscript. The present author has compared 430 and 423 in a passage of about 15,000 words (containing both lemmata and commentary text) and while there are textual differences, they contain the same patristic excerpts with only one variation in the order.

The first test used to discover what other manuscripts contain the catena is textual agreement between witnesses in the New Testament lemmata, based on information available from a manuscript grouping tool made by the Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung (INTF).¹⁰ By itself, this test would have limited value since other manuscripts could contain a similar New Testament text, and some copies of Nicetas might be changed, for example, to make the New Testament text more like a form familiar to the copyist. Nevertheless, it is an important point to examine.

The second test is length. The catena is quite a long book, taking up 575 leaves and approximately 310,000¹¹ words in GA 423. Needless to say, substantial differences in length should help to point out a different text. To estimate the length in each copy, the number of words has been counted in six blocks of ten lines spread throughout the text at regular intervals. These totals are averaged together and multiplied by the total number of lines in the book. For witnesses that are incomplete, the number of words in the surviving portion is estimated and then compared with the number of words in the same portion of 423. For example, GA 869 preserves only Jn 6.21 to 11.57, so its length is compared with the length of Jn 6.21 to 11.57 in GA 423.

While spreading out the blocks of text should, to some extent, offset changes in handwriting and other inconsistencies, the word totals should still be con-

9 There is not space here to explore the relationship between 333 and 423 in detail, but it will be more fully discussed in the present author's PhD thesis, currently in progress at the University of Birmingham.

10 For the grouping tool, see Institut für Neutestamentliche Textforschung, *Test Passages: Manuscript Clusters* (Münster: n.d.), http://intf.uni-muenster.de/TT_PP/TT_Clusters.html; for an explanation of how to use the information provided, see Kurt Aland and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament: An Introduction to the Critical Editions and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism*, trans. Erroll F. Rhodes, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1989), 317–337.

11 Estimates are rounded to the nearest thousand.

sidered rough estimates. Unlike majuscule script, which tends to be fairly uniform, minuscule letters can vary widely in size. Moreover, copyists of minuscule manuscripts regularly employed multiple forms for a single letter and many ligatures and abbreviations.¹² These characteristics, combined with damage to some of the witnesses, make estimating the exact length of these witnesses quite difficult, and so only very large differences in length will be deemed important.

The third test is the sequence and contents of lemmata and patristic excerpts in 80 test passages, mostly from Jn 6 because it is at least partially preserved in all witnesses except 317. For example, in 430 and 423 the first lemma for Jn 6 contains verses 1–2 and is followed by an excerpt from John Chrysostom. GA 869 and 317 are lacking at this point and so cannot be tested, but 249 and 333 are here identical to 430 and 423. GA 743 contains the same excerpt from Chrysostom but the lemmata are arranged differently. GA 841, 886, and 1178 are quite different from the other witnesses. In 841 and 886, which are here identical, the lemma contains Jn 6.1–4 and is followed by a different commentary text than that in 430 and 423. In GA 1178, the lemma contains only Jn 6.1 and is followed by commentary text not found in any of the other witnesses.

4 Examinations of Manuscripts

Test 1: New Testament Textual Agreement

The INTF's manuscript clusters grouping tool contains valuable information on agreement between individual witnesses to the New Testament. For the purposes of presentation, the manuscripts are here divided into three groups designated A, B, and C based on the level of agreement. Group A consists of 249, 333, 423, 430, and 869; group B of 317 and 743; and group C of 841, 886, and 1178. Group A witnesses agree with each other 90% or above, with the highest level of agreement found between 249 and 423 at 96.61%. Group B witnesses show some level of agreement with other manuscripts, though at a further distance than A, all falling between 78.57% and 87.14%. Manuscripts in group C are not closely related to any other witnesses listed here.

As mentioned before, these percentages pertain only to the New Testament text in these manuscripts, not the commentary excerpts, and so they do not make positive statements about what commentary text these manuscripts

¹² Bruce M. Metzger, *Manuscripts of the Greek Bible: An Introduction to Greek Palaeography*, Corrected. (New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 24–31.

TABLE 2 *Agreement in the New Testament Lemmata*

		A					B		C		
GA No.		249	333	423	430	869	317	743	841	886	1178
A	249	/	95.9	96.6	90.7	94.4	85.7	87.3			
	333	95.9	/	95.6	90.0	90.7	78.6	87.1			
	423	96.6	95.6	/	91.3	95.0	85.7	86.6			
	430	90.7	90.0	91.3	/			84.9			
	869	94.4	90.7	95.0		/	85.7	86.5			
B	317	85.7	78.6	85.7		85.7	/	71.4			
	743	87.3	87.1	86.6	84.9	86.5	71.4	/			
C	841								/		
	886									/	
	1178										/

contain. However, the fact that 841, 886, and 1178 are not closely related to the others could correlate with their belonging to some other commentary tradition instead of Nicetas.

Tests 2 and 3: Length and Test Passages

For this section, each manuscript examined will be discussed individually along with the results of tests two and three and other relevant information.

GA 249, categorized as Nicetas only by von Soden, is incomplete, preserving only John 3.22 to 6.20 with commentary in folios 135^v to 248^r. The text is an estimated 46,000 words long, the same length as the equivalent section in 423. In the test passages examined, the lemmata and commentary excerpts agreed with those found in 430 and 423, showing that von Soden was correct in labeling the text Nicetas.

GA 317 contains a catena of John, attributed to Nicetas by Reuss and von Soden, but not by Gregory. It runs to 352 leaves, but is extant only from Jn 10.9 to the end.¹³ Test passages for the lemmata and commentary excerpts

13 There is a note on the first folio naming this the second book of the Gospel of John, apparently indicating that this copy was divided into two volumes.

(which were chosen from chapter 10 since chapter 6 is lacking) show agreement with 423. The estimated word count is 152,000, with the equivalent section of 423 containing approximately 143,000 words. This disparity could point to a genuine difference in length between the two witnesses, or could simply reflect the imprecision in estimating the length of minuscule manuscripts, but because the test passages agree and the difference in length is not great, 317 will here be identified as Nicetas.

The title in GA 743 attributes the text to Nicetas, and the text is complete and 349 leaves long. The estimated word count is 295,000, not far from 423's total of 310,000. Gregory, von Soden, and Reuss all considered the text Nicetas, though as mentioned before Reuss stipulated that 743 preserves an augmented form of the catena with many anonymous commentary excerpts added in the margins (which are not included in the estimated length). Besides the marginal additions, it should be noted that the layout of the main text has been altered as well, with the lemmata and commentary collected into larger units than those found in the other copies of the catena. For example, in 430 and 423, John 6.1–21 is broken up into 11 separate lemmata and interspersed with commentary excerpts. In 743, these 21 verses form a single block of text, followed by commentary excerpts also found in 430 and 423, but all collected together. Such is the format for the entire manuscript. Another departure from the format of 430 and 423 is that the authorship of the excerpts is indicated in the main text rather than in the margins.

GA 841 is identified as Nicetas by Gregory only and contains a complete commentary on John in 108 leaves. New commentary sections begin with the word ἐμπληνεία and without any indication of authorship. Like 333, 841 is inconsistent in the number of lines on a page, but the highest possible estimated word count is 105,000, only about a third of the length of 423. As for the second test, the lemmata and commentary excerpts of 841 do not match those in 423 and 430, so this manuscript should not be classified as Nicetas.

GA 869 is another incomplete manuscript, preserving only Jn 6.21 to 11.57 in 246 leaves. Reuss alone included it in his Nicetas group. The estimated word count of 869 is 98,000 words and the corresponding section in 423 is close at about 94,000. The test passages show agreement with 430 and 423, confirming Reuss's view that this manuscript contains Nicetas's catena.

The title in GA 886 says nothing about Nicetas, and like 841 it lacks identifications of authorship. Gregory alone considered it Nicetas. The text runs for 48 leaves and contains about 117,000 words, falling far short of the 310,000 in 423. The test passages show lemmata and commentary that do not align with 423 and 430, and so 886 should not be considered Nicetas. It does, however, appear to contain the same text as 841.

Finally, there is GA 1178, which only Gregory classified as Nicetas. The title does not mention Nicetas, and there are no indications of authorship. The text is contained in 119 leaves, and at an estimated 77,000 words is much shorter than 423. The test passages show different lemmata and commentary than any of the other manuscripts examined, and so 1178 should not be considered Nicetas.

5 Conclusion

The three tests combined show that of the ten manuscripts examined, seven (namely, 249, 317, 333, 423, 430, 743, and 869) contain Nicetas's catena of John in one form or another. Far from being definitive, however, this list is only a beginning, sorting out discrepancies in works well-known to New Testament scholars. Manuscript identifications are to be found in many diverse works, and as illustrated above (in the case of 841, 886, and 1178) texts may easily be misidentified. Caution is always needed when consulting manuscript catalogues. Furthermore, manuscript listings such as those discussed here often contain numerous entries under "unidentified catena" and other similar labels. It is therefore possible that more copies of Nicetas's catena of John will come to light in the future.¹⁴

14 After this article was completed, continued search for manuscripts of Nicetas led to Robert E. Sinkewicz, *Manuscript Listings for the Authors of the Patristic and Byzantine Periods*, Greek Index Project Series 4 (Toronto, Canada: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1992). This useful work adds two manuscripts to the list here, namely, Patmos M. Ioannou Ms gr. 757 (which is not in the Kurzgefasste Liste) and Gregory-Aland 2188 (M. Batopediou, gr. 529). The INTF in Münster has kindly provided me with images of 2188, but there was not time to incorporate my findings into the present article. At the time of writing, I have not been able to procure a surrogate of Ioannou gr. 757.

PART 4

Early Christianity



The Promise and Threat of “Reception”, with Reference to Patristic Interpretation of Texts in Hebrews and Ephesians

Mark W. Elliott

Despite its image as historicist and even obscurantist at times, ‘historical-critical’ biblical studies at its best offers ancient texts which have given inspiration and guidance for centuries the chance to do the same for the present age. By removing the layers of grimy interpretation modern scholarship helps the gems of Scripture to shine afresh with pristine lustre. This happens best of all when the excavating of the past allows an approximation to the minds and hearts of those involved in the initial production and reception of these texts. To gain a living text for today one must treat it as one that breathed and inspired in its earliest times. Tracing networks between verses and phrases must not be done in a forced way that would by-pass the minds and understandings of the real human beings who were their authors and readers. One looks for clues as to how *they*, those people of yesteryear, read these texts together. The detective work of textual criticism is a mainstay here, but also indispensable is a close reading of texts, sensitive to echoes, ‘intertextuality’ and theological associations, which allows us to discern just what the context or co-text of understanding was.

To put things more positively, a preferable approach to biblical studies is not only one which demands linguistic and historical competence for understanding the original documents, but one that also relates this discourse across both testaments and then, further, to the discourses of historical theology and modern thought. This is not in order to muffle the voice of the ancient texts, or to compress them into doctrinal uniformity. It means setting the texts free to contribute to issues of today, that is the *application* of texts, not least through learning from the reception of yesteryear how texts can be well interpreted as well as excavated; or how, as Markus Bockmuehl puts it, how Scripture has interpreted *us*, the readers. The study of reception cannot afford to be half-hearted and decorative. It is about being surprised, challenged and sometimes humbled by great thoughts discovered in surprising places. It is not about evaluating those exegetes from the standpoint of modern state-of-the-art scholarship. For even though that latter truth is just as important, and quite often more so, yet it is not to be used as a *kanon* or stick with which to beat earlier commentators. *Their* interest was perhaps more in application than understanding, but the mod-

ern way has been to go to the opposite extreme. For Papias the canon and its interpretation was subject to the *viva vox* of tradition (Eusebius EH 3.39.3–4).¹ Factors such as the ‘foot prints’ in the early church of people who knew people who knew an apostle, the contribution of living memory might have a part to play here, although it is no more than healthy scepticism to ask: just how trustworthy is any ‘tradition’, even if we allow a range of witnesses to speak?² Has the Word really been heard more acutely by those living two or three generations after the apostles? For what it is worth, my view is that Scripture had and has enough life of its own without needing ‘tradition’ to make it effective. Tradition’s function was more to repel false interpretations of Scripture, rather than draw out the true ones. It worked as a shield, not a sword.

When one turns to recent moves in ‘reception’ of Paul, one sees that Margaret Mitchell seems more interested in the *figure* of Paul, the *totus Paulus* as it were, as an inspiration to Chrysostom the rhetor.³ Likewise Wolfgang Wis-

1 More generally on this subject, see Yves Congar, *Tradition and Traditions. The Biblical, Historical and Theological Evidence for Catholic Teaching on Tradition* (London: Burns & Oates, 1966); French original: *La Tradition et les Traditions* (Paris, Artheme Fayard, 1963).

2 M.N.A. Bockmuehl, *Seeing the Word* (Baker: 2007), esp. Ch. 6: ‘Living Memory and Apostolic History’. At p. 186, n. 51 he refers to Armin Baum to support his case: Armin Baum, ‘Papias, der Vorzug der Viva Vox und die Evangelienchriften’, *NTS* 44 (1998), 141–151; and W. Löhr ‘Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im Christentum des 2. Jahrhunderts’, in G. Sellin & F. Vouga (Hg.), *Logos und Buchstabe: Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im Judentum und Christentum der Antike* (Tübingen: Francke, 1997), 211–230. Löhr opposes H. von Campenhausen’s description of oral tradition as ‘without bounds’ (‘mündliche Überlieferung ... uferlos’: ‘Es handelt sich vielmehr um in eher dünnes Rinnsal, das auch durch die Forschertätigkeit des Papias immer wieder erst zum Fließen gebracht werden muß ... sie hat die Funktion, durch die Behauptung gesteigerter Authentizität das exegetische Projekt des Papias mit einem Legitimationsvorsprung zu verstehen.’) (214) Löhr locates orthodoxy as positioned between the extremes of Marcion (literality) and Valentinians (orality), as completion, correction and interpretation of texts, without a *hermeneutica sacra*. As for Baum, Scripture clearly was understood as the means of transmission: ‘Und warum hätte er schließlich mündliche Überlieferungen der Presbyter und ihrer Begleiter über die Zeit Jesu und der Urkirche schriftlich festhalten sollen, wenn er erwartete, daß seine zukünftigen Leser mündliche Überlieferungen unabhängig von ihrer Nahe zum historischen Sachverhalt allein aufgrund ihrer Mündlichkeit seinem Werk vorziehen wurden?’ (148), and he points in a footnote 21 to U.J. Körtner’s suspicion that Papias himself wrote because he could not trust the oral to endure. Baum concludes: ‘Den persönlichen Kontakt mit dem Petruschüler hatte Papias der Lektüre seines Evangeliums vorgezogen, ohne damit automatisch die mündlichen Mitteilungen eventueller Schüler des Markus dessen ursprünglicherer Evangelienchrift überzuordnen. Denn der Vorrang der *viva vox* gilt in erster Linie auf derselben Traditionsstufe.’ (151)

3 Margaret Mitchell, *The Heavenly Trumpet: John Chrysostom and the Art of Pauline Inter-*

chmeyer observes⁴ that Pauline reception began with the deuteropaulines, and that it was the *person* of Paul was that which kept all the divergent Pauline and deuteropauline themes from falling apart with mad centrifugal force. Later, Augustine was helped by Paul to read the OT and to see all Scripture as vital, even while it remained full of paradoxes. 'Paul' helped Augustine with his conversion, gave him a non-dualistic anthropology to pit against the Manichees, and around 411–412, at the height of the Pelagian controversy, 1 Corinthians 4:7 served to ground a doctrine of *graced* works: 'what do you have that you did not receive'.⁵ Also, in case there was any doubt, Albert Schweitzer had a point when he claimed: 'Die Reformation kämpfte und siegte im Namen des Paulus ...',⁶ in that its theology was cross-centred in an unmistakably Pauline way. The triumph of Paulinism was complete with the advent of the Reformation. Yet it was arguable a shrunken Paulinism, with catholic material lost from view.

Rather than be eager, as Schweitzer was, to leave behind the pre-modern and focus exclusively on 'the scholarly' (by which he meant 'post-Enlightenment') research into Paul, much can be gained by seeing how Paul was invoked by

pretation. (Hermeneutische Untersuchungen zur Theologie 40; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2000.)

- 4 'Die Rezeption des Paulus in der Geschichte der Kirche', in O. Wischmeyer (Hrsg.), *Paulus: Leben-Umwelt-Werk-Briefe* (Francke UTB 2006), 358–368, 360: 'Das Paulusbild des Chrysostomos ist besonders in den sieben Homilien *De laudibus S. Pauli* zu finden, die im Kreuzestheologen Paulus den "Archetyp der Tugend" als einen Rhetor feiern, der den Engeln in seinem paradoxen Selbststrahl überlegen ist, der aber auch die Fragen der Sozialethik nicht aus dem Blick verliert.'
- 5 W. Wischmeyer, 'Paulus und Augustin', in: E.M. Becker/P. Pilhofer (eds.), *Biographie und Persönlichkeit des Paulus* (WUNT 187, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 323–343, 332. Yet throughout the Middle Ages the shadowing of Augustine by Pelagius lived on in Abelard's Commentary on Romans. Aquinas also drew on Paul: 'wobei es im Römerbrief um die gratia secundum se, in 1–2 Kor um die Gestalt der Gnade in den Sakramenten und in den übrigen Briefen um den *effectus unitatis* der Gnade geht.' ('Die Rezeption des Paulus', 362.)
- 6 Albert Schweitzer, *Geschichte Der Paulinischen Forschung: Von Der Reformation Bis Auf Die Gegenwart*. (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1911), vi: 'Der Paulinismus gehört in die Dogmengeschichte, da die Dogmenbildung als bald mit dem Tod Jesu anhebt.' According to Schweitzer, Ignatius and Irenaeus then lost the way. Romans commentaries got Melancthon and Calvin going: Grotius and Locke were already viewing Paul as a philosopher. For an account of 'Paul' in the Enlightenment, see Hermann von Lips, *Der neutestamentliche Kanon. Seine Geschichte und Bedeutung* (Zürich: TVZ, 2004), and Otto Merk, 'Erwägungen zum Paulusbild in der deutschen Aufklärung', in O. Merk, *Wissenschaftsgeschichte und Exegese* (BZNW 95 Berlin: De Gruyter, 1998), 71–97.

those who followed him in the few centuries after his death. Now this means after 70AD, and there is a school of thought which considers the fall of Jerusalem and its temple to be so much an *Epochenwende*, that those who followed the apostles were hardly closer to them in spirit than, say, the Reformers or New Testament scholars of today. Nevertheless, the Patristic authors are foundational and hence are an important place to start as we consider the legacy of the Pauline letters.

I want to take two examples, neither indisputably Pauline, but texts which gained authority by being associated with him or his apostolic community, as it were. It is my intention to show how these were given a creative interpretation or 'spin' by the church fathers. If faithfulness to Paul means faithfulness to his intention, then they were not faithful, not least since as non-moderns they perceived less of a nexus between meaning and authorial intention than we do. However they were committed to receiving the sense of the texts for the service of the Church, in a way analogous to how these had been alive and given life among the earliest 'Pauline communities'. Second I shall look at Hebrews 2, but first I want to turn to Ephesians 1:10.

Ephesians 1:10: 'To Gather Up all Things in Him, Things in Heaven and Things on Earth'

In his rich and justly famous commentary, Heinrich Schlier noted, on Ephesians 1:10 that the nominal root of the word for 'recapitulation', *anakephalaiosis*, is *kephalaion* not *kephale*. Nevertheless, he continued, the same idea is expressed a few verses later, in Ephesians 1:23, where *kephale* is used, so that the two words function so much alike as to make them interchangeable⁷ Interestingly Jean-Noël Aletti in his more recent commentary thinks otherwise, as does G. Sellin in his. According to Aletti it is not until 1:22 that it means that Christ is head,—and one should not read this back into 1:10.⁸

In any case Schlier was much more interested in the theme of 'election' in his commentary, and much less so in recapitulation. For his part Aletti is more careful to say what the latter term *cannot* mean than to tell us what it does mean. Schnackenburg, reviewing the history of Ephesians 1:10, thought that it

7 H. Schlier, *Brief an die Epheser. Ein Kommentar* (Dusseldorf: Patmos-Verlag), 65: 'Alle Welt hat in Christus ihr Haupt und wird so als die ihm unterworfenen Welt *a principio* geeint und aufgerichtet d.h. auf ihn ausgerichtet. Die Kirche ist aber der Ort, wo dies bekannt und anerkannt wird und also Christi Hauptsein zur Auswirkung kommt in seinem "Leib"'

8 J.-N. Aletti, *Saint Paul. L'épître aux Ephésiens*, (Paris: Gabalda, 2001), 72.

sufficed to relate the word to the cognate ἀποκαταλλάξαι of Colossians 1:20, such that he could rely on the study of the effective-history, which E. Schweizer has made in his *Colossians*-commentary of the latter term.⁹ However, in some ways the amalgamation with Col 1:15 might be a red herring. There is a mention of the cross, and cultic imagery is in the background: in a sense the force of the preferred word in Colossians seems to leave such a thought-world of 'recapitulation' behind and announces something more cosmic in scope. The note in Ephesians 1:10 is not primarily that of 'reconciliation' but something different.¹⁰ So Schweizer and Colossians do not help all that much.

Schnackenburg therefore looks to the early church for help, but finds that the picture become hardly any clearer. He adds that in the early Latin translations of Eph 1:10 we find a range of options for translating ἀνακεφαλαιωσις: *recapitulare, restaurare, instaurare*: (combine, restore, renew.) Whereas Origen and Jerome viewed *anakephalaiosis* as meaning something 'backward-looking' in the sense of re-store, Schnackenburg notes that Irenaeus derived yet other nuances from the word; in addition to the idea of 'gathering together' which looks back at what has gone before, 'he sees also a recapitulation which points to the future, to the completion ... Perhaps the Bishop of Lyons also heard in the Greek expression the subjugation of everything under Christ, the Head.' Hence, concludes Schnackenburg, recapitulation is when God 'returns to us existence according to the image and likeness of God.'

Schnackenburg notes what he calls a 'shift of perspective' between Paul and Irenaeus in some areas: 'More important is the change of emphasis from the theocentrism of Ephesians'. Whatever Paul meant in Eph 1:10, Irenaeus is more Christocentric than Paul: for the bishop of Lyon, Christ 'in himself' (*in semetipsum*) grasps the primacy. He makes Himself the Head of the Church and draws everything to himself. Irenaeus is thereby more 'Johannine' and 'incarnational', and thereby less Pauline. Just as Albert Schweitzer thought, the rot had already well and truly set in and hence '... the less could the view assert itself which saw the story of salvation culminating in the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus.'¹¹ Roughly speaking, Irenaeus made Paul look like John.

9 E. Schweizer, *Der Brief an die Kolosser* (EKK XII; Zürich: Benzinger/Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner, 1976), ad loc.

10 Contra G. Sellin, *Der Brief an die Epheser* (Meyers; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 2008) who follows the work of E. Schweizer here, approximating Eph 1:10 to Col 1:20.

11 Schnackenburg, R. Schnackenburg, *Der Brief an die Epheser* EKK X (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchner/ Ostfildern: Patmos; 2. Aufl. 2003), 327: 'Es ist deutlich, daß sich Irenäus an den Gedanken des Eph inspirierte, aber sie spekulativ auch noch weiter entwickelte und dabei in manchem die Perspektive verschob (...) um so weniger konnte sich eine

Eric Osborn was of a different mind. 'The key word *anakephalaiosis* is limited in secular use to the summing up of a speech by an orator (Dionysus of Halicarnassus. *Lys.* 9) or a mnemonic (Aristotle, *Frag.* 133). *Kephalaion* is much more frequently found, with the several meaning: *head, main point, heads of a play* (Antiphanes Comicus 113.5: *ta kephalaia suggraphon Euripidei*) or *development, summing up, topic of argument, capital sum total, crowning act, completion, chapter*. For Irenaeus, the value of *anakephalaioomai* is that a summing up adds no new material (this against Marcion) and cannot be surpassed (this against the Gnostics). Osborn finds all this quite biblically founded. 'Recapitulation as repetition comes directly from Paul [viz., Ephesians] and is found in Ignatius' 'new humanity'. Recapitulation as perfection is found in Paul, John and Ignatius.'¹² Irenaeus stands in faithful continuity with the NT. There is no 'forward-looking' connotation in Irenaeus' use of the term, and he is not trying to progress beyond Paul in his understanding of it.

So, who is right: Schnackenburg or Osborn? Let us examine Irenaeus' use a bit more closely. The theme first appears in Book III, 21, 10: 'so did He who is the Word, recapitulating Adam in Himself, rightly receive a birth, enabling Him to gather up Adam [into Himself].' However, the treatment in Books IV and V is much fuller and clearer:

V.21.1 He has therefore, in His work of recapitulation, summed up all things, both waging war against our enemy, and crushing him who had at the beginning led us away captives in Adam, and trampled upon his head, as thou can perceive in Genesis that God said to the serpent, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; He shall be on the watch for (*observabit*) thy head, and thou on the watch for His heel." For from that time, He who should be born of a woman, [namely] from the Virgin, after the likeness of Adam, was preached as keeping watch for the head of the serpent. This is the seed of which the apostle says in the Epistle to the Galatians, "that the law of works was established until the seed should come to whom the promise was made." This fact is exhibited in a still clearer light in the same Epistle,

die Heilsgeschichte überblickende, in Kreuz und Auferstehung Jesu kulminierende Sicht behaupten.'

- 12 E. Osborn, 'The logic of recapitulation', in *Pleroma, FS, A. Orbe* (Santiago de Compostela, 1990), 321–335, 322, n. 2, with reference to E. Scharl, *Recapitulatio Mundi der Rekapitulationsbegriff des hl. Irenäus und seine Anwendung auf die Körperwelt* (Freiburg i. Br.: Herder, 1941); Cf. W. Staerk 'Anakephalaiosis', *RAC* 1, 1950, 411–414, 413.

where he thus speaks: "But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman." For indeed the enemy would not have been fairly vanquished, unless it had been a man [born] of a woman who conquered him. For it was by means of a woman that he got the advantage over man at first, setting himself up as man's opponent. And therefore does the Lord profess Himself to be the Son of man, comprising in Himself that original man out of whom the woman was fashioned (τὸν ἀρχαῖον ἄνθρωπον ἐκείνον, ἐξ οὗ ἡ κατὰ τὴν γυναῖκα πλάσις ἐγένετο, εἰς ἑαυτὸν ἀνακεφαλαιούμενος / *principalem hominem illum, ex quo ea quae secundum mulierem est plasmatio facta est*), in order that, as our species went down to death through a vanquished man, so we may ascend to life again through a victorious one; and as through a man death received the palm [of victory] against us, so again by a man we may receive the palm against death.

Recapitulation concerns Adam's story, this time re-done by Jesus Christ. In the passage just quoted above, the image seems to concern the serpent's head getting replaced. Irenaeus speaks of Christ taking up the fight anew—a contest which starts with the temptation of Christ as he resumes the original encounter with the devil: (observans [the Greek is τῇρων] caput serpentis). The Greek seems to think of Numbers 21:4–9LXX here, with the sense of 'looking upon/keeping watch for'. However, possibly indebted to a midrash here, Irenaeus follows the Hebrew *shuf* (strike) when it comes to his interpretation 'striking the head', even where it is not in the Greek-Latin biblical lemma. A head gets struck and is replaced by a new head. The language is military, even violent.

B. Sesbouë has an interesting interpretation of the idea of *anakephalaiosis* in Irenaeus: the chapter (*kephalaion*) of Christ's life resumed the long discourse which constitutes human history.¹³ Therefore the verb means 'assume-be in solidarity, take charge, recreate (as with clay and the man born blind) an obedient humanity'. On his account *anakephalaiō* signifies the process of salvation in Christian experience and not simply the type-antitype relationship of OT-NT.¹⁴ Indeed, 'recapitulation gives time itself validity before eternity'. Christ carried out the obedience where Adam failed (cf. AH IV,10,2). Since the Word suffered with Jesus and did not escape, and the Cross was the true tree of life (AH IV,27),

13 'Le chapitre (*kephalaion*) de la vie du Christ "résume" en sa personne le long discours que constitue l'histoire humaine.' (B. Sesboue, *Tout Récapituler dans le Christ. Christologie et Sotériologie d'Irénée de Lyon* [Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 2000], 160 f.)

14 Hans Urs von Balthasar, *Glory of the Lord* II (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1984), 51.

obedience changes from being directed to the invisible Word as Lawgiver to the now visible Word hanging on the Cross.¹⁵ Yet what is most valuable about Sesbouë's analysis, apart from his reading of Irenaeus as having an actualizing soteriology, is his drawing attention to the connotations of a martial metaphor, implicit in this passage and patent in others.

Thus we read at AH IV, 24,1:

And they received him easily as the first-born of the dead and the prince of the life of God, Him who by stretching out of hands smashed Amalek and made men alive from the plague of the serpent through the faith which was in Him¹⁶

And a few lines later:

In the most recent times having been made a man among men he reformed the human race [Arm and Greek.: he fought for the human race] and destroyed and conquered for the sake of humanity its enemy¹⁷

Again in these passages it is a battle waged with an enemy: the Armenian and Greek of the second passage suggests more a battling with the devil for the human race than any reforming it from the inside. It is less about *Christus Victor* than about '*Christus destructor peccati et diaboli*'.

When it comes to making a positive improvement to human beings, that is where the Spirit comes in, as at AH V,20.2:

These things, therefore, He recapitulated in Himself: by uniting man to the Spirit, and causing the Spirit to dwell in man, He is Himself made the

15 G. Richter, *Der Gebrauch des Wortes Oikonomia im Neuen Testament, bei den Kirchenvätern und in der theologischen Literatur bis ins 20. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005), 219: 'Wie nämlich der menschliche Gehorsam schon im Paradies auf den noch *unsichtbaren* Logos als Geber des Gebots bezogen war, so richtet sich der Gehorsam des Neuen Bundes ebenfalls auf den Logos Gottes, der-nun allerdings *sichtbar*-am Kreuz hängt.'

16 AH IV, 24,1 'et facile recipiebant *primogenitum mortuorum et principem vitae* Dei, eum qui per extensionem manuum dissolvebat Amalech et vivificabat hominem de serpentis plaga per fidem quae erat in eum.' (SC 100, 701)

17 'in novissimis temporibus hominem in hominibus factum reformasse quidem humanum genus, destruxisse autem et vicisse [Arm: pugnavisse pro humanitate viciisse autem—a combattu pour le genre humaine (SC 100, 700/701: ἡγωνίσθαι μὲν ὑπὲρ τῆς ἀνθρωποτήτος/ et viciisse inimicum hominis.)'

head of the Spirit, and gives the Spirit to be the head of man: for through Him (the Spirit) we see, and hear, and speak¹⁸

These last three functions are attributed to a higher sense, which is afforded by the Spirit as head. It is more extra-sensory perception rather than incorruptibility as such which believers receive, notwithstanding that Incorruptibility is the divine attribute created for participation, as *Wisdom of Solomon* 2:23 suggests. Something like a gnosis of God revealed through Jesus is communicated by wisdom, as one becomes united to him. But *how* is this perception communicated to humans in Irenaeus' view? Well, with avoidance of anything that sounded like 'gnosis'. As Ysabel de Andia notes, participation takes place by the Spirit from the resurrected Jesus through the apostles and into the church.¹⁹

Harnack's account of Irenaeus soteriology was that God in Christ worked the reshaping of human nature from inside, conferring it gift of immortality, although humans still have free choice. This was the famous soteriological ellipse, although Harnack thought these two as poles of the ellipse often contradicted each other, for Irenaeus produced an unhappy and unstable synthesis of the Apologists' rationalism and Gnostic mythology. Harnack was right to notice that in this scheme human beings are to grow up into maturity and God, and that this progress happens through freely following him.²⁰ Yet AH IV 14,1 implies that only Jesus' own nature actually changed, not that of humanity as a whole. He was unique not universal. (The uniqueness not the universality seems at issue at AH IV, 26,1, where Irenaeus in speaking of the incarnation employs the Lord's own parable, such that Jesus himself is compared to the treasure hidden in the field.)

E.P. Meijering tried to defend Irenaeus from the charge of inconsistency by arguing that it is all by grace, at the crucial points of creation, incarnation and *eschaton*, with free obedience the definition or content of 'life', but not itself the cause of life.²¹ Thus, obedience *is* life, but can exist only once God has

18 AH V, 20,2.

19 Ysabel de Andia, *Homo vivens: incorruptibilité et divinisation de l'homme selon Irénée de Lyons* (Paris: Etudes augustinienes, 1986), 22.

20 E.P. Meijering, 'Die physische Erlösung in der Theologie des Irenäus' in *God being history: studies in patristic philosophy* (Amsterdam: North Holland, 1975), 150, quoting Harnack, *Lehrbuch der Dogmengeschichte* 1, 625: 'Der Mensch ist nicht von Anfang an Gott, sondern hat die Bestimmung zur Unvergänglichkeit und soll sie schrittweise, von der Kindheitsstufe zur Vollkommenheit fortschreitend, erreichen.'

21 Ibid., 154: 'Harnacks These, die physische Erlösung bedeute ein Handeln Gottes an der menschlichen Natur, wird von der Eschatologie des Irenäus bestätigt: wenn das unver-

intervened. So, for Meijering, the Harnackian Irenaeus' doctrine of *physische Erlösungslehre*, that salvation is something that happens essentially to human nature, makes sense and is consistent with human free will. Yet he defends Irenaeus against Harnack: one cannot separate off an 'ethical' sphere and say that Jesus' significance only dealt with that.

Therefore it seems that for Irenaeus that Christian soteriology is all about following Jesus in order to receive grace, as in the phrase τὸ γὰρ ἀκολουθεῖν τῷ Σωτῆρι μετέχειν ἐστὶ τοῦ φωτός²² where it goes on to speak of 'receiving light'. It is not about making one's own grace, but one receives by following the particular One in a particular manner. This is quite the reverse of Hegel's view in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, as quoted by Osborn: 'Christus ist für alles gestorben; das ist nicht [sic] etwas Einzelnes, sondern die göttliche ewige Geschichte'. As Pierre Benoît noted, in Irenaeus' *Epideixis*, recapitulation is consistently antithetical rather than complementary; it represents an antithesis, not a progression.²³ Also, as Antonio Orbe put it, the Fall is a serious moral fault but one that God can use: correction and perfection work together. Yet for that to be a moral change, it cannot operate at the level of being but at that of the will.

In sum, the biblical Paul of Eph 1:10 is more cosmic, the church father Irenaeus is more moral (Christ works to cut sin off) and 'actualizing' (the Spirit leads but does not overwhelm such that life in the Spirit is a life of moral agency) to the extent of being 'hyper-Pauline'. Any idea of an Irenaeus' *physische Erlösungslehre* needs to be treated with scepticism.

Hebrews 2:5–9

Hebrews 2:5–10:5 For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. 6 It has been testified somewhere, "What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou carest for him? 7 Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor. 8 putting everything in subjection under his feet." Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. 9 But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower

gängliche Leben in der Auferstehung des ganzen Menschen (Geist, Seele, Leib) geschenkt wird, dann ist es nicht mehr abhängig vom Glaubensgehorsam.'

22 SC 100, 539.

23 Cf. P. Benoît, *Saint Irenée* (Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 1960) p. 249.

than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one.
 10 For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.

It might be instructive to start by considering three recent commentaries on this passage.

For Knut Backhaus (2009) the message is clearly Logos-centred. The Psalm 8 [as quoted here] became a witness concerning the dramatic way of Christ, passing through humiliation to elevation.²⁴ Backhaus seems to envisage Hebrews' Christ as a pioneering divine Person who descended from heaven to lead us back, a 'divinity' that merely *tasted* death. There is a transposition of the anthropological reference in the psalm, as Redeemer and Redeemed, being and fortune, blood and flesh belong together so that through the christological sense one is led back to the original sense of the psalm: the amazement-arousing family resemblance of humans with God became through Jesus a relatedness through flesh and blood and fate.²⁵

According to Martin Karrer (2008) the theme of Hebrews (nb.—Hebrews, not just this passage) is the glory and rescue of endangered humanity. Christology matters because first and only in Christ is it realised that humanity properly speaking is glorious, despite suffering, guilt and death.²⁶ Thus it is Anthropology which is the *thema* and Christology which is the *rhema*. Karrer here is right, but only half-right: humanity is the main theme even in Hebrews, yes, but it is the humanity of Jesus, so that is not just a *rhema*. For, as Erich Grässer argued

24 'Die Psalm wird zu einem Zeugnis über den dramatischen Christus-Weg durch Erniedrigung zur Erhöhung.' (Backhaus, *Der Hebräerbrief* [Pustet, Regensburg, 2009]. 117.)

25 'In ihr ist die anthropologische Lesart des Ps8 im dreifachen Wortsinn aufgehoben, die Erlöser und Erlöste, noch Sein und Schicksal, Blut und Fleisch, untrennbar zusammengehören. Das bedeutet der Abstieg und Aufstieg des Sohnes für das Heil seiner menschlichen Geschwister. So findet der Psalm, genau betrachtet, auf christologischen Umwegen zum Ursprungssinn zurück. Die Staunen erweckende Familiennähnlichkeit des Menschen mit Gott wird durch Jesu zur Verwandtschaft aus Fleisch und Blut und Schicksal.' (Backhaus, 116)

26 'Kurz, das innere Thema des Hebr beruht in der Herrlichkeit und Rettung des gefährdeten Mensch ... Die Christologie behält in dieser Themenbestimmung höchstes Gewicht. Denn erst an ihr erschließt, dass der Mensch trotz Leiden, Schuld und Tod zu Recht herrlich heißt.' (Martin Karrer, *Ökumenischer Taschenbuchkommentar zum Neuen Testament* (ÖTK): *Der Brief an die Hebräer: Kapitel 5,11–13,25*: [Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008], 164.)

in his EKK commentary, Hebrews does not think of humankind in general but thinks of the *one man* whose fate prejudices and gathers together in him the fortune of everyone.²⁷ So the message or *thema* is neither purely messianic nor purely anthropological but an ecclesiological mixture of the two, as seen from the point of view of Redeemer and Redeemed:²⁸ Jesus in his humanity was raised up by grace and as such is subject of the Chapter. Karrer adds that most fathers took v. 6's *oikumene* to mean the present world stretching into the future. In the nineteenth century it was interpreted as a world that is different from this one; but no, it means *this* world, but this world as it should be, thinks Karrer. Yet one could develop this: 'the world as it should be' could be translated 'the ecclesia'.

The variant reading 'apart from God' in v. 9 (as alternative to 'by God's grace') means the encountering relationship that God makes available to humans who are trapped by their pressurizing private worlds.²⁹ In other words grace for us only comes through forsakenness for Jesus. Grässer (1994) however sees this variant as imposed by those who wanted to distance God from suffering and missed the original NT theology of grace located in the dying of the Son: the majority reading is right.³⁰

Either way the significance of the OT quotation is not altered. In fact it shapes the interpretation, exerting pressure on the NT text that received it, by identifying Jesus with humanity. It is all about a man, Jesus and not a descending Logos, and we should notice the co-text of the theme of the human Christ as the 'Captain of Salvation'³¹ in the next verse. Hebrews envisages

27 'Hebr. nicht an den Menschen im allgemeinen denkt, sondern an den *einen* Menschen, dessen Schicksal das Geschick Aller (vgl/v.11: ἐξ εὐος πάντες) präjudiiert und in sich sammelt.' (ibid.)

28 '(W)eder rein messianische noch die bloß anthropologische Deutung noch die Koppelung beider auf dem richtigen Weg, sondern die *ekklesiologische* unter dem Gesichtspunkt der Solidarität von Erlöser und Erlösten.' (ibid.)

29 '*Choris theou*: Sie bezeichnet jenes Entgegenkommen, mit dem Gott sich den Menschen die von sich aus ihrer bedrückenden Eigenwelt verhaftet sind, öffnet.' (Backhaus, 119.)

30 Erich Grässer, *Der Brief an die Hebräer*. EKK XVII/1, Hebr 1–6 (Neukirchen [Neukirchen-Vluyn] und Patmos [Ostfildern, 1994.) 125 'Ein Motiv, warum man es im 2.Jh. in χάρις verändert hat, ist unschwer zu finden: mangelndes Verständnis für die christologische Paradoxie. Gott von der "Schmach Christi" (vgl. 5,7 f.; 13,12) zu distanzieren, lag dem dogmatischen Interesse der Alten Kirche näher als das Umgekehrte, im Sterben des Sohnes göttliche Gnade am Werk.'

31 One is indebted to Rowan Greer for a study of the Eastern Fathers' exegesis of Hebrews with that title: *The Captain of Our Salvation: a study of the patristic exegesis of Hebrews* (Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1973).

Christ's role as 'priestly'.³² Perhaps, *pace* Grässer, it is better to see the grace at work in the Son's elevation. By God's grace Jesus tasted but did not digest death.

When one turns to the patristic evidence, only once is the passage mentioned in Irenaeus, at AH IV.33.13, and here it is only an allusion. For his part, Tertullian used the passage to help fight against Praxeas' modalist patripassianism with the weapon of 'clear subordination for a time'. It is in the Son who was placed a little below the angels by the Father: the Son is then crowned and the Father does the crowing and the Son is raised back to the Father's status.³³

However, as Greer noted, the decisive change came with Origen. In the *Dialogue with Heraclides* ch. 27 Origen's insistence on the 'except for God' reading reconciles Heb 2:9 with 1 Tim 6:16, which says God is immutable. As Greer notes, it leads Origen into Trinitarian subordinationism, going as far as to use the phrases 'lower than the angels' and 'because of the suffering of death' to argue that the Word, already lower than the Father, was made lower than the Holy Spirit ('angel'), out of voluntary humiliation in the Incarnation.³⁴ Likewise in the Comm Jn 28, s. 154 the *choris theou* variant appears. Also, in Comm Jn 2, 123 (SC 288) he declares that Christ did not share the Father's immortality, since he tasted death. The Father kept away from Christ's suffering.

However in Comm Jn 1, 255 Origen is mindful of the textual alternatives: 'without God' or 'grace of God', and seems to favour the latter.³⁵ If, he writes, it is 'except for God' this means Christ has died not only for humanity but before the Incarnation for other spiritual beings also—'except for God'—for it is absurd to say he wouldn't have died for those found in sin such as the stars (whose sinfulness Job 25:5 confirms) too. This is quite a different interpretation of the meaning of *χωρίς θεου*. For the emphasis is on the range of the efficacy of Christ's death, not on preserving God from suspicion of suffering, despite what

32 Jean-Pierre Mondet, 'Le sacerdoce ministériel dans le Commentaire sur l'épître aux hébreux de S. Jean Chrysostome' in *Figure du prêtre dans les grandes traditions religieuses* (*Actes du Colloque en hommage. à l'abbé Ries*; Leuven: Peeters, 2005) pp. 229–251.

33 'et si qua haeretici adprehendunt quasi Deo indigna ad destructionem creatoris, ignorantes haec in Filium competisse qui etiam passiones humanas et sitim et esuriem et lacrimas et ipsam nativatem ipsamque mortem erat subiturus, propter hoc minoratus a Patre modicum citra angelos.' (Tertullian *Adv. Prax.* 16, 4–5; *Fontes Christiani* 34, 178) 'Quid si et alius qui coronabatur gloriam et honorem, alius qui coronabat, utique Filium Pater minoravit Filium modico citra angelos ad terram dimittendo, Gloria tamen et honore coronaturus illum in caelos resumendo.' (*Adv. Prax.* 23, 5; FC 34, 212).

34 Ibid., 50: 'It is the Incarnation that proves the Word to be subordinate.' (With reference to Comm Jn II. XVII, 125; SC 120, p. 289.)

35 SC 120, p. 186.

Greer thinks.³⁶ And yet one last idiosyncratic example should be mentioned, at Comm Jn 32, 354, which states that the economy of the suffering of the Son of Man is a matter of grace, for all happens *not without* God (οὐ χωρὶς θεοῦ). Origen, thinks the *Sources Chrétiennes* editor Cecile Blanc, was perhaps swayed here by 2 Cor 5:19 where God is reckoned to be clearly in Christ at the moment of reconciling the world. Furthermore: 'And the Son of Man was shown for not only God was revealed in him.'³⁷ Thus the humanity of Christ was crucial for Origen, just as Grillmeier taught us.

However, when we turn to John Chrysostom, the agency is divine and the humanity operates only passively. In his Hebrews Homily IV 2–3 John turns to the passage under discussion:

Now although these things were spoken of human nature generally, they would nevertheless apply more properly to Christ according to the flesh. For this, "Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet," belongs to Him rather than to us. For the Son of God visited us when we were nothing: and after having assumed our [nature], [τὸ ἐξ ἡμῶν] and united it to Himself, He became higher than all. Moreover he said rightly "taste death for every man," he did not say "die." For as if He really was tasting it, when He had spent a little time therein, He immediately arose. By saying then "for the suffering of death," he signified real death, and by saying "superior to angels," he declared the resurrection. For as a physician though not needing to taste the food prepared for the sick man, yet in his care for him tastes first himself, that he may persuade the sick man with confidence to venture on the food, so since all men were afraid of death, in persuading them to take courage against death, He tasted it also Himself though He needed not. "For," He says, "the prince of this world cometh and findeth nothing in Me." (John xiv. 30.) So both the words "by grace" and "should taste death for every man," establish this.

Chrysostom in Greer's view is more interested in the Christian life, as the 'payoff' of the transformation of the human by grace. In this discussion 'his emphasis is rather upon the divine activity in Christ.'³⁸ What Christ did then was by grace of condescension towards the human race, and any tasting of

36 Greer, 51: "To Origen the verse is meant to read: "He tasted death for all rational beings except God."

37 SC 385,340 Νῦν οὖν, ὅτε ἡ οἰκονομία τοῦ ὑπὲρ πάντων πάθους τοῦ ἀνθρώπου γίνεται οὐ χωρὶς θεοῦ ... οὐ μόνος καὶ ὁ θεὸς γὰρ ἐδοξάσθη ἐν αὐτῷ) ...

38 Greer, p. 279.

death was not tantamount to natural dying, but to some approximation to it. The alternative was to go with Theodore and propose: 'But once for all heavenly things were made accessible to men, when one of us men was assumed and according to the law of human nature died, and was raised from the dead in a marvelous fashion and became immortal and incorruptible by nature, and ascended into heaven.'³⁹ As Greer concludes: 'The notion that the Man is the first principle of men's salvation and is to be distinguished from other men not by nature but by the uniqueness of the grace given him is, in fact, a theological judgement central to Theodore's Christology.'⁴⁰

The quotation from the Psalm was always interpreted by Jews 'anthropologically', but gradually Christian commentators came to interpret it, with Chrysostom and against Theodore and Origen, purely Christologically in the sense of the Word descending, instead of anthropologically, even in a Christological context. Despite Thomas Aquinas' doughty advocacy of the anthropological reading, the 'for a little time' temporal reading of *brachy ti* must refer to Christ's having a human nature as a temporary measure, as Erasmus concluded.⁴¹ This human nature was something that could then be dispensed with, or absorbed into the Word through elevation. It is ironic that that great Humanist promoted an interpretation which implied that through its being passively elevated the humanity was on the verge of disappearing.⁴²

39 Theodore of Mopsuestia, *Catechetical Homily* (Tonneau, p. 329), quoted by Greer, p. 350.

40 Greer, p. 351. Unfortunately Greer skips Chrysostom's treatment of Heb 2:5 ff.

41 'Die überragende Aussage veranlasste Ausleger allmählich, unseren Abschnitt christologisch statt anthropologisch zu lesen ... Verstanden sie *brachy ti* im Sinn der LXX, mussten sie es darauf auf die menschliche Natur Christi beziehen. [cf. Erasmus, *Annotationes*; Reeve, 706]. Die Mehrheit bevorzugte eine temporale Lektüre: Christus habe kurze Zeit unterhalb der Engel, d.h. auf Erden verweilt ... Die Position Thomas verlor sich allmählich. Die Dominanz der christologischen Deutung mit dem temporalen *brachy ti* hielt sich.' (Karrer, 170)

42 See Hermann-J. Vogt 'Unterschiedliche Exegese der Alexandriner und der Antiochener', in *Festschrift Ernst Dassmann; JbAC* 1996, 357–369, who speaks of a 'Cyrillische Umdeutung christologischer Texte des Theodor von Mopsuestia'. 'Der Ausdruck $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\iota$ θεοῦ bedeutet für Cyrill, dass die Inkarnation ein ungeschuldetes Handeln Gottes ist und dass dabei die Göttlichkeit des Gottessohnes unangetastet bleibt.' (357) For Theodore of Mopsuestia, however, the reading was $\chi\omega\rho\iota\varsigma$ θεοῦ, and he criticised Cyril's reading. As Vogt points out, both were trying hard to preserve the divine impassibility in Christ, Cyril by avoiding nature language and saying Christ suffered 'by grace', Theodore by reserving the suffering for the humanity alone.

Conclusion

The early church should not be given undue respect for a conservation of biblical meaning when it comes to its interpretation of key texts in the NT. As early as Irenaeus theologian-exegetes were keen to channel Scripture to serve in the fight against their opponents. This did not mean that Christian theology lost its roots in Judaism and biblical theology through some corruption by philosophy or even by some accompanying oral tradition, but simply because, given its own concerns, it did right and was faithful in bending the biblical text into a useful shape for the sake of application.

Between Ritual and Moral Purity: Early Christian Views on Dietary Laws

Moshe Blidstein

The biblical dietary laws (Lev. 11; Deut. 14), concerned mainly with prohibitions on eating certain animals, were widely perceived by Christian writers to be one of the most salient features of Jewish religion.¹ Christian writers were not the first to perceive the dietary laws as central to the definition of Jewish religion. This was a general feature of Greco-Roman perception of Jews, as evinced by the many comments of pagan authors on the dietary laws.² Indeed, their role as identity markers and maintainers of borders between religious communities is already inherent in some biblical passages, and is prominent in later Jewish texts as well.³ The importance of these laws in polemics and discussions

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- 1 For example, Jerome, *Commentary on Matthew* 15.12: “By one statement, all the superstition of Judaic observances was struck down, of those who think that their religion consists in the receiving and abomination of food.” (Trans. Thomas P. Scheck (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2008), 179). To the best of my knowledge, the only comprehensive study dedicated to Christian perceptions of biblical dietary law after the second century CE is. A general overview, although omitting many sources, is found in S. Stein, “The Dietary Laws in Rabbinic and Patristic Literature,” *SP* 2 (1957), 141–154. Peter J. Tomson, “Jewish Food Laws in Early Christian Community Discourse,” *Semeia* (1999), 193–211, is an excellent study, but it is mostly dedicated to New Testament texts. An important but highly focused contribution is Scott A. Swanson, *Fifth Century Patristic and Rabbinical Ethical Interpretation of Cult and Ritual in Leviticus*, PhD Diss. (Hebrew Union College, 2004), 173–229. J. Neusner, *Aphrahat and Judaism: the Christian-Jewish Argument in Fourth-Century Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 1971), studies the attitude of one central text. Recently, David M. Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food: Constructing Otherness in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Law* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), 85–101, studied this question as part of a broader investigation on foreigner’s food and food-rules.
 - 2 Josephus, *Cont. Ap.* 2.137; Plutarch, *Quest. Conv.* 4, 4.4–6.2. See Peter Schäfer, *Judeophobia: Attitudes towards the Jews in the Ancient world* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 66–81; Jordan Rosenblum, “‘Why do you refuse to eat pork?’: Jews, food, and identity in Roman Palestine,” *JQR* 100.1 (2010), 95–110.
 - 3 Deut. 14.2; 21. Lev. 20.24–26. See Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 1–16: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1991), 718–736. Sacha Stern, *Jewish Identity in Early Rabbinic Writings* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 56–59; 78–81, observes that as opposed to the bible and Jewish Hellenistic texts, dietary laws do not figure prominently as positive identity

between Jews and non-Jews in antiquity is unsurprising in light of their practical role in hindering close Jewish interaction with non-Jewish society.

By the second century, it was widely (though not universally) accepted that the biblical dietary laws, together with the two other prominent Jewish identity markers in ancient discourse—Shabbat observance and circumcision—were not binding upon Christians. Dietary laws were different from Shabbat and circumcision, however, in that they were universally perceived by Christian writers as a central dimension of Jewish ritual purity and are therefore central to an understanding of purity in late ancient Christianity. This perception was based on the biblical usage of terms of impurity (MS *tameh*, LXX *akatharton*) to refer to the prohibited animals, and their proximity to other laws of impurity in Leviticus (ch. 12–15). However, there are actually significant differences between the dietary laws and other biblical purity laws. Dietary laws are a prohibition on eating certain animals. There is no process for purification from the impurity of these animals, and their impurity is not contagious in any way; moreover, a person who eats them is not barred from entering sacred space. This can be opposed with death-impurity or sexual impurities, which are contagious, entail a process of purification, and prevent contact with the sacred.⁴ The complete lack of appreciation of this point by all patristic writers (considered by Tomson a “massive misunderstanding”)⁵ may indicate that their knowledge of Jewish purity customs was mostly based on the biblical text and not on real-life contact. Critically, this misunderstanding allowed writers to use NT passages actually relating to purity laws as if they related to dietary law, leading to the positioning of dietary law as the target for anti-Jewish rhetoric.⁶

markers in Rabbinic texts, but only as negative markers (i.e., gentiles are castigated as eating defiled foods, and sometimes identified with these foods).

4 These differences led Jonathan Klawans, *Impurity and Sin in Ancient Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 31–32, to designate biblical dietary laws as being in an area of “overlap” between his constructs of moral and ritual purity, stating that he does not discuss them extensively due to their uniqueness. We, however, cannot do the same, as the post-NT Christian authors focused on these laws when discussing purity; it could be suggested that this focus was the result of their polarizing discourse of ritual and morality, which prevented them from seeing the nuances of the ritual systems. A more effective framework is that of Freidenreich, *Foreigners and Their Food*, 26–28, for whom the biblical dietary laws are an example of intrinsic impurity, as opposed to circumstantial impurity arising from contact with the impure.

5 Tomson, “Jewish Food Laws”, 198.

6 New Testament texts probably do not contain any direct references to biblical dietary laws. The adage “Jesus declared all foods clean” and the opposition between internal and external agents of defilement (Mark. 7:14–19; Matt. 15:11) do not concern biblical dietary laws but rather

This move was facilitated by another important difference between dietary and purity law: the latter creates hierarchies between different parts of the Jewish population, while the former differentiates between Jews and non-Jews; a focus on dietary laws therefore permitted Christian writers to identify Jewish purity laws in general as being highly characteristic of the Jewish religion and not of other religions, an important step towards their delegitimization.

Why Should the Dietary Laws be Rejected?

Patristic authors offered a number of closely-linked explanations for the rejection of biblical food laws as binding in practice. The most fundamental argument was based on the general Pauline view that the Old Testament should be read spiritually and not according to the letter (2Cor. 3:6) and that the Law should only serve for moral edification or as a type foretelling Christianity.⁷ Dietary laws fit well into the Pauline rubric of Judaism being “fleshly” as opposed to the “spiritual” Christian practice; food is, after all, closely related to the flesh, and therefore any laws which concern it could be said to be fleshly as well. So, for example, Origen:

In connection with food or drink or outward observances of this sort, which are reckoned among the Jews as the religion of the angels, we should not be judged by anyone ... this elation does not accord with the wisdom of the Spirit but with the sense of the flesh. It is not concerning fleshly matters that is had been commanded, “Do not handle, do not touch, do not taste.” For all these things, that is, fleshly things, have been given for this corruptible use, and what observance of purity can consist in corruption?

Commentary on Romans 9.42.8⁸

proto-rabbinic purity laws, as demonstrated convincingly by a number of scholars; see Yair Furstenberg, “Defilement Penetrating the Body: A new understanding of contamination in Mark 7.15,” *NTS* 54, 176–200. Peter’s vision commanding him to eat “unclean animals” (Acts 10:9–16) is interpreted in the text itself as relating to interactions with gentiles and not to eating animals at all; compare Ezek. 4:9–17.

⁷ Acts 10; Mark. 7:19. Origen, *Commentary on Matthew* 11.12; *Homilies on Leviticus* 7.4–5; Methodius, *de Cibis Judaicis* 7; Theodoret, *Questions on Leviticus* 11; Epiphanius, *Panarion* 30.22.6–10; Procopius, *Commentaries on the Octateuch*, PG 87.725.

⁸ Translation by T.P. Scheck, *Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans. Books 6–10* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press), 2002, 251.

In the same way, Methodius exhorts “not to worry so much about food and cloven hoofs, and more about justice, spiritual food and acts of charity.”⁹ The opposition is simple: between outer and inner, ritual and moral, carnal and spiritual.

A second argument completing the first is that while the law had indeed been in force in the past, Jesus annulled it, and therefore Christians are no longer bound by it.¹⁰ The force of these two arguments, beyond their focus on the carnal/spiritual opposition, is in the construction of the identity of Christians versus Jews through their opposing attitude towards the food laws.¹¹

A third argument for rejecting the dietary laws, concerning their supposed inherent logic more than their being Jewish, is that all bodily things have the same positive moral status as God’s creation, and therefore there should be no differentiation between various things which lack a higher soul and therefore moral capacity, such as animals or food; there can be no justification to see some of them as impure and others as pure. As put by Novatian:

Are the animals therefore unclean? ... [then] the blame attached to things which are made will recoil upon their Maker, who did not produce them clean; to say which is certainly characteristic of extreme and excessive folly: it is to accuse God as having created unclean things, and to charge upon the divine majesty the guilt of having made things which are abomination, especially when they were both pronounced “very good,” and as being good have obtained the blessing from God Himself “that they should increase and multiply.”

de Cibis Judaicis 2¹²

9 Methodius, *de Cib.* 8.

10 *Didascalia Apostolorum* 26 (Arthur Vööbus, *The Didascalia Apostolorum in Syriac* (Louvain: Secrétariat du CorpusCO, 1979), 1:241 [text]; 2:223 [translation]).

11 In parallel to this argument, some writers remind us that the dietary laws did not exist in the time of Noah (“Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything,” Gen. 9.3), and can therefore be considered a temporary measure: Justin, *Dialogue with Trypho* 20; Hesychius of Jerusalem, *Commentary on Leviticus*, PG 93:904.

12 Translation by Russell J. DeSimone, *The Trinity, The Spectacles, Jewish foods, In Praise of Purity, Letters* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1974), 147. The typical prooftext here is Timothy 4:4: “For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving,” cf. *Epistle to Diognetus* 4.2; Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 15; Chrysostom, *Homilies on 1 Timothy* 12. In *Homilies on Titus* 3, Chrysos-

This argument attempts to group together Jewish dietary practices with Gnostic ideas of the inherent evil of matter, rejecting them both as a falsification of the true biblical message. It is thus not surprising to find it in Augustine's argument against the Manicheans in the *Contra Faustum* (31.4).¹³

All these arguments, which appear again and again in Christian writers of the first centuries CE, would appear to reflect a non-problematical, wholesale opposition to ritual purity and to food laws. However, the status of the food laws was in fact more complicated, for two main reasons. First, Christians who upheld the Hebrew Bible still had to explain the text of Leviticus in some way, as opposed to non-orthodox positions which did away with the Hebrew Bible altogether. Second, abstinence from certain foods and conceptions of impurity of certain corporeal things was not at all foreign to the Christianity of the period, and writers therefore had to justify the distinctions between different kinds of abstinences. These problems, and the responses to them, indicate that Christian purity conceptions were not as straightforward as would appear at first.

What is the Meaning of the Dietary Laws?

First, for the problem of the Hebrew Bible: if the food laws were not meant to be practised, why did they appear in scripture? Patristic answers to this question fell into four categories: historical, ascetic, symbolic or allegorical and demonological.

Historical solutions explained that the food laws were necessary at the time of their commandment in order to distance the Jews from idolatry or as a

tom provides a slightly different angle to this argument, based on the supposition that the Jews think that certain animals are impure because they eat dirty things. To this he retorts with the argument that many animals eat dirty things but are still considered pure. This argument appears in a developed form in an interesting and very long discussion of Jewish dietary laws as well as death impurity in the 8th century Syriac text *The Disputation of Sergius the Stylite against a Jew*, ed. A.P. Hayman (Louvain: Secretariat du CorpusSCO, 1973), 35–65 (ch. 13–20). However, this text is later than the period under discussion. For the genealogy of this argument, see Moshe Blidstein, "How Many Pigs were there on Noah's Ark? An Exegetical Encounter on the Nature of Impurity," *Harvard Theological Review* 108:3 (2015), 448–70.

13 For the tendency to merge the supposed opinions of Jews and Gnostics in Christian literature, see Averil Cameron, "Jews and Heretics—A Category Error?" in Annette Yoshiko Reed and Adam Becker, eds., *The Ways that Never Parted: Jews and Christians in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 345–360.

punishment, but are now no longer relevant.¹⁴ The laws are said to be specific to the Jews and to their situation, and therefore do not reflect on the inherent spiritual status of animals.

Ascetic solutions argue that the Jews were commanded to abstain from certain foods in order to purify their bodies or their souls. This interpretation is explicit only in a small number of writers, but appears implicitly in some others.¹⁵ As opposed to the historical solutions, ascetic solutions imply that the dietary laws have some inherent moral value which is not historically contingent.

Symbolic exegesis, or allegorization, is perhaps the best-explored solution to the problem. The biblical food laws point to people or actions which should be shunned, symbolized by the impure animals, as opposed to people or actions which should be embraced, symbolized by the pure animals. This solution has a long history, starting before Christianity with Jewish Hellenistic authors, and featuring heavily in many patristic authors throughout our period.¹⁶ Allegorization reflects a neutralization of biblical impurity laws by transferring their significance to the actions of free-willed human agents, and is a central method of Christian writers to contend with the dietary laws.

The demonological solution is put forth by Origen. Origen returns to the issue of the food laws many times in his writings, mostly championing the aforementioned allegorical solution. However, in two places he proposes a radically different idea:

[Moses] understood the different nature of animals and ... in his legislation about animals he said that all the animals which are regarded as

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- 14 Justin, *Dial.* 20; *Didascalia Apostolorum* 26; Methodius, *de Cibis* 7; Aphrahat, *Demonstrations* 15; Pseudo-Ephrem, *Commentary on Leviticus* 11; Eusebius of Emesa, in R. Devreesse, *Les anciens commentateurs grecs de l'Octateuque et des rois: fragments tirés des Chaînes* (Città del Vaticano: Biblioteca apostolica vaticana, 1959), 95; Theodore Bar Koni, *Book of the Scholia* 3.41; Isodad of Merv, *Commentary on Leviticus* 11; Procopius of Gaza, *Commentaries on the Octateuch*, PG 87.728.
- 15 Philo, *Special Laws* 4.100–101; 4 *Maccabees* 1.33–34; Clement, *Paedagogus* 2.1; Tertullian, *Contra Marcionem* 2.20.1; *On Fasting* 5.
- 16 *Letter of Aristeeas* 150; Philo, *Special Laws* 4.106–107; *Epistle of Barnabas* 10; Irenaeus *Adversus Haereses* 5.8.3; Clement, *Paedagogus* 3.11 and *Stromateis* 5.51–52, 7.109.3; Novatian, *De Cibis* 3; Origen, *Hom. Lev.* 7.6–7 and *Contra Celsum* 5.49; Pseudo-Ephrem, *Comm. Lev.* 11; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 4.17.18–21; Athanasius, *Festal Letters* 7.2; Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 16.30; Theodoret of Cyr, *Questions on Leviticus* 11; Hesychius of Jerusalem, PG 93.905; Procopius of Gaza, PG 87.725.

having prophetic powers by the Egyptians and the rest of mankind are unclean, and that broadly speaking those not so regarded are clean ...

Contra Celsum 4.93¹⁷

Thus, impure animals are unique in that demons prefer them over other animals. Origen explains that demons have more power over unclean animals because these animals are “wild and wicked”; they can therefore be used for divination, as demons dwell in them and speak through them. Origen’s explanation operates on two levels: the animals themselves are strangely, ambivalently evil (“[they] have something about them resembling evil, and although it is not evil yet it is like it”) and as a result, evil demons occupy them; the fact that animals regularly occupied by demons should not be eaten is apparently self-evident, a point we will return to. Origen’s explanation is quite unusual for a patristic author: it admits that there is some real, permanent reason for the prohibition of certain animals and their designation as impure, going far beyond any of the other explanations. However, Origen’s two methods of interpretation for the food laws, the symbolic and the demonic, have the same general objective in that they are both methods of “spiritualization” of the animal’s status: symbolically, by equating impure animals and evil human beings, and demonologically by peering deeply into the animal’s soul and discerning there a demonic spirit. The demonic element allows Origen to find a moral site for the animal’s impure status beyond its natural “evilness,” which apparently was not a sufficient reason for declaring it impure. Origen’s interpretation comes full circle when we are reminded of his imaginative use of bestial images to understand the inner workings of the human soul.¹⁸ We can also find some context for it in the demonic identification of wild animals in works such as the *Life of Anthony*, where the saint fights the animal-demons which are sent to intimidate him: “in the *Life of Antony* ... There is a clear connection between demons that appear as animals, animals that

17 Translation by Henry Chadwick, *Contra Celsum* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 258. In *Homilies on Numbers* 16.7.13, Origen presents a shorter version of this argument.

18 Patricia Cox, “Origen and the Bestial Soul. A Poetics of Nature,” *VC* 36.2 (1982), 115–140. See further on the blurring of boundaries between wild animals and demons in late ancient Judaism and Christianity, especially in Origen’s thought: Guy Williams, “An Apocalyptic and Magical Interpretation of Paul’s ‘Beast Fight’ in Ephesus (1Corinthians 15:32),” *JTS* 57:1 (2006), 42–56; Ingvild S. Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans: Changing Attitudes to Animals in Greek, Roman and early Christian Ideas* (London: Routledge, 2006), 205–226.

obey the command of the Devil and animals of flesh and blood, which are evil because of their inherent bestial nature.”¹⁹

Origen’s curious explanation brings us to the second reason Jewish food laws were not so easily dispensed with, namely, that Christians also had food laws, with a firm basis in the earliest texts.

Food Offered to Idols: A Christian Dietary Observance

The basis for most Christian dietary observances after the second century is the “Apostles’ Decree” appearing in the book of Acts (15:20, 29 and 21:25), in which the Jerusalem church agreed that ritual demands from gentiles should be limited to abstinence “food offered to idols/the pollution of idols (eidōlothuton (15:29, 21:25)/līgēmātōn tōn eidōlōn (15:20)), of sexual immorality (porneias), of the meat of strangled animals (pniktou) and of blood.”²⁰ For our purposes, it is significant that the food is not only prohibited by the Decree, it is also considered to be polluted. The verses in Acts, however, don’t give any reasoning to support the prohibitions, beyond their Jewish background. For such reasoning we have to look to Paul.

The prohibition of food offered to idols was at the centre of Paul’s famous debate with the community of Corinth, appearing in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10. Paul censures those of the community who eat food offered to idols, arguing that although the eating as of itself is inconsequential, it is still dangerous

19 Gilhus, *Animals, Gods and Humans*, 223; cf. *Life of Anthony* 39.3; 51.5. See further David Brakke, *Demons and the Making of the Monk: Spiritual Combat in Early Christianity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 31–32, who claims that “Jews and Christians traditionally interpreted the unclean animals in the Septuagint as symbolizing demons,” however with no corroboration for this statement. Beasts and demons do frequently occupy the same space, as for example in Revelation 18:2, on Babylon: “She has become a dwelling place for demons, a haunt for every unclean spirit, a haunt for every unclean bird, a haunt for every unclean and detestable beast.”

20 This verse raises many textual problems, and the literature on the subject is extensive. The most comprehensive and up-to-date investigation is Jürgen Wehnert, *Die Reinheit des christlichen Gottesvolkes aus Juden und Heiden: Studien zum historischen und theologischen Hintergrund des sogenannten Aposteldekrets* (Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1997), reviewed by M. Bockmuehl, *JTS* 50:1 (1999), 260–268. Summaries of the textual problems are found in W.A. Strange, *The Problem of the Text of Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 87–105; A.J.M. Wedderburn, “The ‘Apostolic Decree’: Tradition and Redaction,” *NovT* 35:4 (1993), 362–389. Marcel Simon, “The Apostolic Decree and its Setting in the Ancient Church,” *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 52 (1969), 437–460.

in a Christian community, because it defiles the weak conscience of some of its members (8:7–10). Defilement of conscience is certainly a rather vague concept, but it demonstrates the connection Paul saw between eating this kind of food and impurity, and more significantly for us, it would influence the development of these concepts by later writers.²¹ Some verses in chapter 10 (21–23) show Paul speaking from a more essentialist position, according to which eating food offered to idols is prohibited not because of its effects on the minds of others but because it creates partnership with the demons which accompany these idols and to which the sacrifices are directed. The more stringent position categorically prohibiting eating food offered to idols became the norm for the next three centuries. The prohibition on eating blood, also appearing in Acts, is not mentioned by Paul, and commanded much less attention in patristic literature. Furthermore, discussions of the reason for the blood prohibition do not usually relate to the question of defilement, except when coupled together with the issue of idol sacrifices.²²

Early Witnesses of the Idol-Food Prohibition²³

The prohibition on eating food offered to idols appears already in the *Didache*: “And concerning food, bear what you are able; but concerning that which is sacrificed to idols be exceedingly careful; for it is the service of dead gods

21 Many comprehensive attempts have been made to understand the positions of Paul and of his interlocutors, the “Strong” of Corinth regarding the eating of food offered to idols, with a number of monographs appearing in the last decades. See, for example, Wendel L. Willis, *Idol Meat in Corinth: the Pauline Argument in 1 Corinthians 8 and 10* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1985); Peter D. Gooch, *Dangerous Food: 1 Corinthians 8–10 in its Context* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1993); Alex T. Cheung, *Idol Food in Corinth: Jewish Background and Pauline Legacy* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999).

22 An exception is Tertullian, *Apol.* 9.13, who says that Christians abstain from blood “that they may not contract pollution.” John Chrysostom says that some people think that blood is not to be eaten because it is “heavy, earthy and nauseating;” he himself rejects this view (*Homilies on Genesis* 27.16.).

23 In the following I will not discuss all the texts of the period, but only those which may contribute to an understanding of the reasoning beyond the prohibition and the way the defilement of the food offered to idols was understood. Other texts demonstrating the adherence to the prohibition up to the fifth century may be found in K. Böckenhoff, *Das apostolische Speisegesetz in den ersten fünf Jahrhunderten* (Paderborn, 1903), which is still the most comprehensive study for the post-NT texts; For writers of the 2nd and 3rd century, see Cheung, *Idol food in Corinth*, 210–277.

(6.3).” There are various opinions as to the original context of this sentence in the early church: it may be part of the original Jewish stratum of the *Didache* (*‘the Two Ways’*), a Jewish-Christian “appendix” to the Jewish stratum, or from the pen of the final editor of the *Didache*.²⁴ In any case, by the mid-second century this sentence, calling for specific abstinence from *eidōlothuton* as a minimum requirement was in existence and was aimed at Christians in general, not specifically those coming from a Jewish or from a non-Jewish context. Noteworthy is the call for abstinence from some foods (“bear what you can”): it could concern either Jewish dietary laws or general abstinence (for example from meat), but there is in fact no way to know, and scholars have taken both positions. All we can say is that there was some concern about certain foods which are not *eidōlothuton* as well.

The reason given for the prohibition is too laconic to allow any definitive interpretation beyond the obvious connection with idolatry.²⁵ Apparently, the act of eating of the offerings is itself considered to be a *latreia*—it is not that the food was defiled by the act of offering and should therefore not be eaten, but rather that eating it will be considered to be an act of worship, perhaps even when performed outside temple precincts.

The early 2nd century *Apology* of Aristides declares, as part of a list of Christian virtues, that “of the food which is sacrificed to idols they do not eat, for they are pure (ch. 15).” The explicit connection made between purity and abstinence from food sacrificed to idols is noteworthy. It is evident that the food sacrificed to idols is defiling, and that the Christians, with their purity, could not tolerate it. The argument is even more curious when considered in the context of an apology to a Roman Emperor, who could hardly be imagined to believe that eating food sacrificed to idols is defiling. The *Didache* and Aristides show

24 David Flusser, ‘Paul’s Jewish-Christian Opponents in the *Didache*,’ in *Gilgul: Essays on Transformation, Revolution and Permanence in the History of Religions*, ed. S. Shaked, D. Shulman, and G.G. Stroumsa, 71–90 (Leiden: Brill, 1987); Jonathan A. Draper, ‘A Continuing Enigma: the ‘Yoke of the Lord’ in *Didache* 6.2–3 and Early Jewish-Christian Relations,’ in *The Image of the Judaeo-Christians in Ancient Jewish and Christian Literature*, ed. Peter J. Tomson and Doris Lambers-Petry (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), 106–123.

25 The reason given for the prohibition, “for it is the service of dead gods,” does not appear in other Christian texts of the period, and is probably based on LXX Psalms 105:28 on Bal Peor, “*ephagon thusias nekrōn*,” connecting the *Didache* to Revelation 2:14, which speaks explicitly of this incident. See also Hebrews 9:14, in a sacrificial context: “For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls ... sanctifies for the purification, how much more shall the blood of Christ ... purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living god.”

that the prohibition was very common in the second century, but they do not provide much in the way of explanation or contextualization.

Answering an accusation by Trypho that some Christians eat food offered to idols, Justin Martyr says that those who do so see themselves as Christians, but are actually heretics.²⁶ Irenaeus expands on this point, and claims that Basilides, Saturninus and the Valentinians do not believe that actions in the bodily world have any influence on man's spiritual status, and therefore commit many sins, including "eating food offered in sacrifice to idols, thinking that they cannot be defiled by them."²⁷ Clearly, such food was considered in the second century to be a source of defilement, which only heretics who perform heinous sins would dare to contract. Irenaeus' wording suggests that not only was eating such food seen as an act of idolatry, but also the food itself was considered to be defiling. Neither Justin nor Irenaeus provide any explanation for the prohibition—it is self-evident for them, and does not need to be explicitly based on an authoritative text.

There is no external collaboration for the claim that Gnostic Christians had less regard for this prohibition; rather, the dietary prohibition is used by these writers for defining the boundaries of orthodoxy, at periods and places in which its function for absorbing non-Jews into a mostly Jewish church becomes less relevant. This function is more central in Justin, where the eating of *eidōlothuton* is the only difference he cites between the orthodox and non-orthodox.

Biblical Dietary Laws vs. Christian Observances

The second-century texts we have seen do not tackle the question of the relation between the prohibition of food sacrificed to idols and the rejection of the biblical dietary laws. The problem is clearly stated by Jerome: "An intelligent reader may object and say: if what enters into the mouth does not defile a man, why do we not eat things sacrificed to idols?" (*Comm. Matt.* 15.11). Such an explicit formulation is uncommon, but the question stands at the foundation of many of the discussions on food sacrificed to idols. I understand the sub-

²⁶ *Dialogue with Trypho* 35.

²⁷ Irenaeus, *Adv. Haer.* 1.6.3; see also 1.24.5. In a later usage of the observance of the pollution of sacrifices as marking a border between orthodox and heretic, Victorinus of Pettau (fl. late 3rd cent.) comments on a heresy which believes "that what had been offered to idols might be exorcised and eaten, and that whoever should have committed fornication might receive peace on the eighth day" (*Commentary on Revelations* 2.6; ANF 7:346).

text of this question to be a question of identity—In what are Christian food prohibitions different from Jewish food prohibitions? How can we say that impurity concerns only Jews and not Christians, and at the same time mark certain foods as defiled?

The most comprehensive early discussion of the question is by Clement of Alexandria in the second book of the *Paedagogus*, a book which presents his views on the pleasures of the physical world in general and of food in particular:

But less us turn our attention now to the food that is spoken of as 'idol-offered', and to the command enjoining us to avoid it. These foods I consider a pollution (*miara*) and an abomination (*bdehura*) from the blood of them fly 'the shades from out of Erybus now dead.' I would not have you become associates of devils, the Apostle says. There are two sorts of food, one ministering to salvation, and the other proper to those who perish. We should abstain from this last sort, not out of fear (for there is no power in them), but to keep our consciences pure and to show our contempt for the devils to whom they have been dedicated. And another reason is the impressionability of those who interpret so many things in a way that harms themselves, ... The physical act of eating is indifferent ... but it is not right for those judged worthy of partaking of divine and spiritual food to share 'the table of devils.'

Paedagogus, 2.1²⁸

Clement appears to perceive the contradiction between the prohibition on food offered to idols and the claim that the "act of eating is indifferent." In his solution, which is clearly based on the two Pauline notions of the role of demons and the defilement of conscience, Clement puts forwards a number of new ideas. First, food offered to idols is itself polluted; this is something that was said in Acts, but not by Paul. Furthermore, he argues that "there are two sorts of food, one ministering to salvation, and the other proper to those who perish," or to put it more simply, the differentiation between Christians and non-Christians should be expressed (also) through food. The differentiating of social groups is of course central to any dietary law, and especially to the Jewish dietary laws. Thus, Clement understands the basic function of the Christian dietary laws to be quite similar to that of the Jewish laws.²⁹ This uncomfortable

28 Translation by Simon P. Wood (trans.), *Christ the Educator* (New York: Fathers of the Church, 1954), 100.

29 Clement further underlines the similarities by noting that Jews were prohibited from

proximity and the fact that Christians are not called to abstain from all food eaten by non-Christians requires the utilization of a further idea, based directly on 1 Corinthians: food as it was made by God, in its natural state, cannot be defiled, but it becomes polluted due to its association with the demons.³⁰ Through this differentiation, the Christian writer can distance himself from the Jewish food laws, which were understood to be based on the conception that the forbidden animals were unclean by nature.

Beyond the demonological explanation itself, Clement also attempts to show that it is not the physical aspect of the food that is the problem, but rather the agency of the mind of the man eating it: his "conscience" and his "reason." He contrasts fear of the demon's power—an emotional, irrational response—with detestation and abomination, responses based on free choice of the rational agent. This focus on human agency and its role in the subjugation of passions (and indeed of demons) is central to ascetic thought in Clement and in late antiquity in general.³¹ In this case, however, it is especially pointed: first, because it was formulated as a response to the Jewish tradition of impurity which is thought to lack human agency ("natural" impurity), and second, because the demons hovering above the sacrifice are (even according to Clement) "naturally" impure: only the sacrifice itself, the pivot of this whole discussion, is not. Natural impurity is allowed to reside only in the spiritual world, occupied by demons and angels, and its descent into the bodily world cannot occur by itself, but only through the human agent.

After Clement, Origen is the writer who elaborates most on the subject, in two long passages in the *Contra Celsum* (8.28–30), and in his *Commentary on Matthew* (11.12). In both instances Origen begins with a short exposition of the Jewish position on dietary laws, going on to explain Jesus' views on inner and outer purity, and emphasizing that true defilement can only be a result of evil thoughts or deeds and not of bodily food. After this, he proceeds to contend with the question of food offered to idols. Although Origen does

eating the animals of Lev. 11, but were not allowed even to touch animals that died, were strangled, or were offered to idols (The first two are in Lev. 11:26; the impurity of idols is probably not biblical but an innovation of the Rabbis, see *Mishna Shabbat* 9:1). Thus the Christian observances (except for blood) are actually those which were considered most important also by the Jews.

30 This point becomes the basic solution of many writers: Novatian, *de Cibis* 5; Jerome, *Comm. Matt.* 15.11; Amphilochius of Iconium, *Against the Heretics*; It is especially stressed by Chrysostom, *Hom. 1 Tim.* 12; *Hom. 1 Cor.* 25; Augustine, *Contra Faustum* 32.15.

31 See Elizabeth A. Clark, *Reading Renunciation: Asceticism and Scripture in Early Christianity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), esp. chapter 8, "From Ritual to Askesis."

not explicitly say so, his arrangement of ideas indicates that he is aware of the apparent contradiction between the emphasis on internal purity and the prohibition of certain foods. In the *Contra Celsum*, Origen does not add any new solution for this problem beyond what is found in Paul and in Clement, but he adopts this solution and expands it—explaining all three prohibitions of the Apostles' Decree according to a demonological explanation: blood draws demons, and strangled animals still have their blood in them; when eating blood, “we might have such spirits feeding along with us,” and then we are “joining the table of demons.” Together with his demonological explanation for the biblical food laws, it is evident that Origen consistently prefers to explain all food laws through demons. In the *Commentary on Matthew*, Origen emphasizes the aspect of knowledge or doubt of eating sacrifices, which causes a person to “eat not in faith”; by this, he can then distance the defilement from the bodily food:

And the man who knowing that they have been sacrificed to demons nevertheless uses them, becomes a communicant with demons, while at the same time, his imagination (*phantasias*) is polluted (*memolusmenēs*) on account of the demons participating in the sacrifice. And the Apostle, however, knowing that it is not the nature of meats which is the cause of injury to him who uses them or of advantage to him who refrains from their use, but opinions and the reason which is in them, says ‘But meat commends us not to God, for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we eat not are we the worse’.

Comm. Matt. 11.12; ANF 9:441

In this explanation, Origen integrates the two Pauline ideas of association with demons and defilement of conscience. According to him, it is not the sacrifice that pollutes the mind but rather the demons; however, the demons do not actively pollute the person, but rather his mind is somehow polluted “on account” of the demons, because the mind believes it is polluted. Origen discusses this rather subtle point in his *Commentary on Romans* (extant only in Rufinus' Latin translation):

And you should not be surprised that the reflection of the mind makes food defiled that, of its own nature, is neither common nor defiled, though simplicity of mind and the absence of scrupulosity of reflection ... absolves truly defiled food (*cibum vere pollutum*)—for what is sacrificed to idols is truly defiled. And, again, even if the food is clean, nevertheless someone may come under suspicion, as would be the case when what

has been sacrificed to idols is said to be defiled on account of a scrupulous conscience.

Comm. Rom. 9.42.5; trans. SCHECK, 250

From this passage it appears that there are two levels of impurity: the “true defilement” which is inherent in food sacrificed to idols, but which is annulled by “simplicity of mind,” that is, by not believing in its power; and the defilement on account of conscience, which is secondary—but still present and significant enough to prohibit the food from being eaten.

For Origen and Clement, the sacrifices are a bodily stepping-stone between the demon-world and the mind of man, both spiritual; the presence of offerings is required for the demons to pollute the mind, but they themselves, being bodily, cannot be said to be truly polluted. The writers attempt to diminish the role of the bodily sacrifices by expanding the role of the two spiritual agents: the demons on the one side and the mind of man on the other, but they cannot escape the fact that the sacrifices are still somehow required for the pollution to be transferred.

Clement and Origen are performing here the exact opposite move from what we earlier noted was performed upon biblical dietary law. Biblical dietary law was portrayed by Christian writers as concerning primarily the purity and impurity of animals, not as a prohibition: a statement of inherent spiritual status of bodily things, not a divine commandment for humans to perform. Christian observances, on the other hand, are portrayed in the opposite fashion, as a commandment hinging upon human agency, in which inherent “natural” status plays no part. Thus I would expand on Peter Tomson’s important statement that “it is not the contents of Jewish food and purity laws which makes the Church Fathers condemn them, but their being labelled as Jewish. For similar practices observed in their own gentile Christian communities are labelled positively.”³² The practices are indeed similar, but they pass through a prism of interpretation which provides them with very different meanings, as impurity or as prohibition. Therefore, the identification of the practices as Jewish or Christian occurred together with a process of providing them with opposite significance, thereby changing their content and accommodating them to their role in the perception of “Judaism” and “Christianity.”

The early-third century novel “the Circuits of Peter” preserved in the pseudo-Clementine literature includes a number of distinctive ideas on the question of food offered to idols: “And the things which pollute both the soul and the body

32 Tomson, “Jewish Food Laws”, 201.

are these: to partake of the table of demons, that is, to taste things sacrificed, or blood, or a carcass which is strangled, and if there be something else which has been offered to demons (*Recognitions* 4.36.4 (ANF 4:302)).³³

It is generally agreed that the Circuits of Peter was produced in a Judeo-Christian environment.³⁴ It includes some dietary restrictions that were certainly not the norm in the Christianity of the period, such as the recurring commandment to refrain from eating with gentiles until they baptize. It is interesting to find the idea that blood is prohibited because of the demons' association, which we saw in Origen, is also present in a document originating from quite a different milieu.³⁵ The pollution of blood and of sacrifices and their relationship to the demons is developed further in a number of passages of the Pseudo-Clementine Literature. The demons are told that they do not have power over men, except if the men subjugate themselves to them by sacrificing or eating sacrifices, by "shedding blood, or tasting dead flesh, or filling themselves with that which is torn of beasts, or that which is cut, or that which is strangled, or aught else that is unclean (*Homilies* 8.19)."

The pollution of "both body and soul," which is directly opposed to Origen's insistence that the demons pollute only the imagination, accords with other purification rituals of the Circuits of Peter and of some other Jewish-Christian sects, which were explicitly said to purify the body. It is evident that the Circuits of Peter is much more receptive to the idea that demons pollute the eater of blood or sacrifices than the Alexandrian writers. Although sin is created by the person's free will, the resulting pollution is not rooted in human choice to detest the sacrifice but rather in direct action by the demons themselves.

33 A shorter version is *Homilies* 7.8.1. In other passages (*Hom.* 8.23; 9.23), the prohibition on eating from the table of demons/idols is mentioned independently, without the prohibition on blood. A.F.J. Klijn, "The Pseudo-Clementines and the Apostolic Decree," *NovT* 10:4 (1968), 305–312 discerns two layers in these texts, the earlier speaking of demons and blood, and the later, influenced by the "Apostle's Decree," including also carrion. Even if this reconstruction is true, the earlier text still includes the connection between impure demons and the pollution of blood.

34 F. Stanley Jones, "Jewish Christianity of the Pseudo-Clementines," in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian 'Heretics'*, ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen (Leiden: Brill, 2005), 315–334.

35 The parallelism was noted by Marcel Simon, "De l'observance rituelle à l'ascèse: recherches sur le Décret Apostolique," *RHR* 193:1 (1978), 27–104.

Summary

The problem at the basis of the discussion of Christian dietary laws is rather similar to that at the basis of the discussion of the Jewish food laws—how could there said to be impurity in the world, stemming from bodily things which were not responsible for any moral action? How could a body without a soul be “really” evil? This question was complicated by the view that inherent defilement was a Jewish idea, which Christians should not adopt.

The first imperative of most commentators is to insist that the Christian view of impurity does not imply evil residing in the bodily world, while the Jewish view is that it does. Therefore, impurity in the Old Testament it is either a prohibition on food directed at improving the human soul, whether in the short term (historical solutions) or the long term (ascetic solutions), or a symbol for other prohibitions. New Testament texts were treated in a similar way: the patristic view is that negative or positive status given to food is a result of the human disposition towards it—and its objective is changing the behaviour of humans. The symbolic method of exegesis, however, is much less prevalent in the discussion of Christian observances than in Old Testament exegesis, as it usually implied the rejection of the practical binding force of prohibitions or obligations.

Christian writers understood defilement to be synonymous with evil, and could not comprehend the possibility of impurity which does have a clear moral value; they therefore had to find a moral way of thinking about defilement which did not clash with their worldview. The exegesis and theorizing of Christian thinkers on both Jewish and Christian food laws represents a process of de-reification, an attempt to deconstruct the perceived idea of impurity and to construct it anew on the foundation of the human conscience and choice. This move was greatly facilitated by the agency of demons, beings hovering on the borderline of the corporeal and incorporeal, and thus bridging the natural and the moral realm.³⁶ While this deconstruction may appear at first to undermine the basis for a “real” distinction between various foods, it appears that it is rather an attempt to maintain the system of hierarchies created by traditional food distinctions while using a new moral language which accords with the cosmological and anthropological outlook of the new religion.

36 For patristic views on demons' bodies, see Gregory A. Smith, “How Thin is a Demon?” *JECs* 16 (2008), 479–512.

The Greek Patristic Reception of the Sibylline Oracles

Madalina Toca

This paper examines the reception of the Sibyllines in the Greek Patristic literature up to the fourth century. Tracing references to and quotations of the Oracles in the works of Justin Martyr, Athenagoras of Athens, Theophilus of Antioch, Clement of Alexandria, and Pseudo-Justin, this study surveys the uses, functions, and authority of the Sibyl in Christian apologetic contexts.¹ As will be seen, the Oracles tend to have a protean character, as they were not only held to be authoritative “divine testimonies,” but they were also set in conversation with Scriptural materials and contemporary philosophical language.

Justin Martyr's *Apologies*

Although Justin shows strong disagreements with the Gnostics, Simon Magus and especially Marcion (*Apol.* 1 16; 1 26, *Dialogue* 35.6), he is never overtly against the Sibyl, or the classical philosophers. His line of reasoning makes use of a rather ingenious tactic: since the Sibylline Oracles were an important part of the Greco-Roman religious life, they could be adopted and used as effective missionary tools. As will be shown below, displaying “common ground” examples between the Christian and the pagan views is actually a *topos* in Justin's apologetic thought. The pagan ideas are not non-assenting, but they are altogether seen in complementarity with the Christian ones.

1 On the use of Sibylline Oracles in early Christian literature: G.J.M. Bartelink, “Die Oracula Sibyllina in den frühchristlichen griechischen Schriften von Justin bis Origenes (150–250 nach Chr.),” in *Early Christian Poetry*, eds. J. Den Boeft and A. Hilhorst, Supplements to VC 22 (Leiden: Brill, 1993), 23–33; R. Buitenwerf, *Book 111 of the Sibylline Oracles and Its Social Setting* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003), 72–91; H.W. Parke, *Sibyls and Sibylline Prophecy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1988), 152–173; Bard Thompson, “Patristic Use of Sibylline Oracles,” *The Review of Religion* 16, 3–4 (1952): 115–136.

a *Apol. I 20.1*

Mentioning the name of the Sibyl² two times in I 20.1 and I 44.12 of his *Apolo-
gy*, Justin associates her with Hystaspe³ as well as the prophets (τάς Ὑστάσπου
ἢ Σιβύλλης ἢ τῶν προφητῶν βίβλους). In *Apol. I 20.1*, Justin credits the Sibyl and
Hystaspe with foretelling a destruction of the corruptible beings by fire (Καὶ
Σιβύλλα δὲ καὶ Ὑστάσπης γενήσεσθαι τῶν φθαρτῶν ἀνάλωσιν διὰ πυρὸς ἔφασαν).⁴ To
strengthen his argument and demonstrate that the charges against the Chris-
tians were unfounded, Justin connects the Sibyl to a stoic illustration regarding
the consumption through fire—"and those called Stoic philosophers are of the
view that even God himself is resolved into fire (... καὶ αὐτὸν τὸν θεὸν εἰς πῦρ ἀνα-
λύεσθαι ...)."⁵ Pairing the Sibyl and the Stoics was arguably a tactical move since,
for instance, Marcus Aurelius—the Roman emperor and one of the addressees
of Justin's *Apol.* under the name of "Verissimus"—was a devotee of the latter.⁶
Similarly, a few paragraphs later, Justin establishes parallels between the bibli-
cal understanding of creation and that conveyed in Plato's *Timaeus* (Πλάτωνος
δόξομεν λέγειν δόγμα), portraying a series of philosophical analogies with "the
poets and philosophers" (ποιηταῖς καὶ φιλοσόφοις τὰ αὐτὰ λέγειν δόξομεν—I 20.4).
Since the Christians "seem to say the same things as the poets and philoso-

2 In the following, for the Greek text of the *Or. Sib.*, I will be using J. Geffcken, *Die Oracula Sibyllina*, GCS 8 (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1902); for the English translation, J.J. Collins, "Sibylline Oracles," *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1. Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments, ed. by J.H. Charlesworth (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1983), 317–472, with minor modifications.

3 Hystaspes is a legendary figure, a Persian satrap converted by Zoroaster, sometimes identified as the father of Darius I. The *Oracle of Hystaspes* pertains to the Persian apocalypses preserved only through the mentions of Latin and Greek authors (Lactantius, *Div. Inst.* 7.14.8, 7.15.19, *Epit.*, 68 (73); Ammianus Marcellinus 23.6.32; Justin's *Apol.* I 20.1, I 44.12; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 6.5.43.1, etc.). See J. Bidez, F. Cumont, *Les mages hellénisés. Zoroastre, Ostanès et Hystaspe d'après la tradition grecque* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1973): Vol. 1 (Introduction): 215–223; Vol. 2 (Texts): 359–377.

4 C. Munier proposes as a parallel *Or. Sib.* 2.196. Cf. C. Munier, *Apologie pour les chrétiens*, Sources Chrétiennes (hereafter SC) 507 (Paris: Cerf, 2006), 185, footnote 3. The passage from Justin, however, does not have any precise parallels with *Or. Sib.* 2 (it may equally echo *Or. Sib.* 4.173–178, or 7.119–122), or with any other verses on the final conflagration from the *Or. Sib.* See also J. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles* (Oxford: OUP, 2007), 105.

5 Translations from D. Minns and P. Parvis, eds., *Justin, Philosopher and Martyr. Apologies* (Oxford: OUP, 2009).

6 R.M. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: Westminster Press, 1988), 74 f., 52.

phers" (*Apol.* I 20.1), Justin successfully sidesteps critiques that he is giving his faith too exclusive a role.

In the same vein, in *Apol.* I 21 Justin again takes the opportunity to establish bonds with pagans: he affirms that the Christian theory of the Logos, the first-born of God (τὸν Λόγον, ὃ ἐστὶ πρῶτον γέννημα τοῦ θεοῦ—I 21.1), and Christ incarnated, crucified and then resurrected, is not unprecedented (οὐ ... καινόν τι φέρομεν—I 21.1) when compared to the Greco-Roman mythologies. Justin seems to proceed with a Christian expression of faith, which is then skilfully correlated with pagan examples in order to render it more appealing to them. In this particular fragment, the apologist explains that, by way of the Logos and the Spirit, it is God himself who speaks in these writings. The Sibyl thus serves as an Hellenistic element through which a Christian tenet is proposed to the pagan.

b *Apol.* I 44.12

In *Apol.* I 44, Justin Martyr addresses the theory of divine inspiration, and the possibilities of being granted the gift of the "true" prophecy. His main interest lies in defending Jesus who, as Logos and Son of God, implants the "seeds of truth" in all humans. Making use of allegories and typologies, Justin demonstrates that there are traces of Christology preserved in the Old Testament, and attributes the theophanies of the Old Testament⁷ to the pre-existent Christ. Thus, what Plato holds true is but an inspiration from Moses (παρὰ Μωσέως τοῦ προφήτου λαβὼν εἶπε—I 44.8), since Moses "is more ancient than even all the writers in Greek" (πρεσβύτερος γὰρ Μωσῆς καὶ πάντων τῶν ἐν Ἑλλησι—I 44.8). Moreover, the philosophers and the poets know about the immortality of the soul and punishments after death through prophetic mediation. Hence, "there are seeds of truth"⁸ (σπέρματα ἀληθείας—I 44.10) amongst all [men],⁹ infused through the spirit of prophecy, but they are all dependent on the authority of the Scriptures.⁹

7 In his treatment of the Old Testament theophanies, Justin draws on Judaism and Philo. In the *Dialogue*, Justin engages even more in showing that the Old Testament prophecies had been already fulfilled in Christ. It is in this work, that Justin calls the Greeks "already Christians." R. Grant, *Augustus to Constantine. The Rise and Triumph of Christianity in the Roman World* (Louisville, London: Westminster John Knox Press, 2004), 110 and 113.

8 Minns and Parvis distinguish between the "seeds of reason sown by the spermatik logos" which enable philosophers and poets "to see what was co-natural to that Logos," and the "seeds of truth" (as in this case), which "are in fact materials, or 'starting-points' taken from the prophets" (195).

9 C.H. Cosgrove, "Justin Martyr and the Emerging Christian Canon," *VC* 36 (1982), 209–232.

After drawing on these theories of “borrowings,” Justin turns to the Sibyl. He suggests that the prophetic spirit (cf. προφητικοῦ πνεύματος in I 44.11) inspires the Sibyl, Hystaspe and the prophets. In doing so, Justin disagrees (*Apol.* I 44.12) with those who condemn reading such works (θάνατος ὠρίσθη κατὰ τῶν τὰς Ὑστάσπου ἢ Σιβύλλης ἢ τῶν προφητῶν βίβλους ἀναγινωσκόντων). It is not surprising that further on, in *Apol.* I 44.13, he sees the Sibyl’s prophecies as “pleasing to all” (πᾶσιν εὐάρεστα), including the Christians, who have nothing to be afraid of (ἀφόβως).

In sum, there are no direct quotations from the Sibyllines in Justin’s works, and the two references to Sibyl’s name function as points of contact between Hellenistic *topoi* and Christian tenets, apparently meant to make the latter more appealing to the pagan mind. However, only the teachings of the Logos alone (in the Old and the New Testament) have full authority, while the Sibylline Oracles might eventually possess some sort of “seeds of truth,” reliant on the prophets.

Athenagoras of Athens’s *Legatio sive supplicatio pro Christianis*

Like Justin’s *Apol.*, *Legatio pro Christianis* is also directed at emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Aurelius Commodus, whom Athenagoras addresses as philosophers and wise men (*Leg.* 2.3). Athenagoras’ treatise addresses three main themes, as he fights against the charges of godlessness, cannibalism (“Thyestean banquets”) and incest (“Oedipodal unions”).¹⁰ First, he explains that Christian faith is not atheistic but monotheistic and ridicules the pagan gods. In order to substantiate his claims, Athenagoras appeals to a range of poets and philosophers (among whom is also the “Sibyl”),¹¹ all of which, to his mind, illustrate vain pagan deifications.

In *Leg.* 30.1, Athenagoras quotes *Or. Sib.* 3.108–113 in a polemic against the pagan gods and the imperial cult. There he rebukes the practice of euhemerism as the transformation of simple humans into gods, and takes one of the examples from the Sibyl. Informing the reader that Plato also mentions the Sibyl, Athenagoras goes on to quote six lines from the third book (*Or. Sib.* 3.108–113),¹² in which we are told that the kings Kronos, Iapetos and Titan were made gods

¹⁰ R. Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 102.

¹¹ N. Zeegers-Vander Vorst, *Les citations des poètes grecs chez les apologistes chrétiens du iie siècle* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires de Louvain, 1972), 25; for a comparative tableau on the citations used by the apologists, see 32–33.

¹² This passage is also cited in Theophilus, *Ad Aut.* 11, 31 (*Or. Sib.* 3.97–105), Tertullian, *Ad Nat.*

by humans who proclaimed them as the sons of Gaia and Ouranos. This occurs in the conclusion of his demonstration that gods are the works of humans (who venerate them for various purposes and reasons), or even the works of demons.

Buitenwerf notes that, even if there is not much information that can be traced from this isolated reference, the “quotation is important since it is the earliest Christian testimony of Book 3 of the *Or. Sib.*”¹³ It is also important to note that here, the Sibyl is an exponent and illustration of a pagan custom that is to be rejected. As Athenagoras has it at the end of the chapter, the writings that tell such stories are ultimately not to be trusted (ἄπιστοι), and the reverence shown to them by people is far-fetched (περισσή).

Theophilus of Antioch's *Ad Autolycum*

Written at the end of the second century, *Ad Autol.* is usually regarded as an elaborate treatise in three parts that incorporates didactic instructions, elements of exegesis, polemics, apologetic passages and missionary efforts.¹⁴ Theophilus quoted the Sibyllines *in extenso*, at one point giving a 35-line testimony, and at another point bringing to the fore 49 more verses. In *Ad Autol.*, the *Or. Sib.* are referred to four times.¹⁵ From these, three occurrences have parallels in the so-called “fragments i, ii, and iii”¹⁶ of the *Or. Sib.* (*Ad Autol.* 2.3—*Or. Sib.* fr. ii, *Ad Autol.* 2.36—*Or. Sib.* fr. i, *Ad Autol.* 2.36—*Or. Sib.* fr. iii). The fourth passage, *Ad Autol.* 2.31, echoes *Or. Sib.* 3.97–103, 105 and 8.5. Apart from these quotations which have a parallel in the *Or. Sib.* as we know them today, there is another mention to the figure of the Sibyl herself (*Ad Autol.* 2.9), without a direct reference to some *Or. Sib.* verses.

11, 12 (*Or. Sib.* 3.108–113). Cf. B. Pouderon, *Athénagore. Supplique au sujet des chrétiens et Sur la résurrection des morts*, SC 379 (Paris: Cerf, 1992), 187, footnote 3.

13 R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 87.

14 R. Rogers, *Theophilus of Antioch. The Life and Thought of a Second-Century Bishop* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2000), 15 ff.

15 R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 72 ff.

16 For a discussion of the implication of these fragments for the textual reconstruction of the *Or. Sib.* collection, see Geffcken, *Komposition und Entstehungszeit der Oracula Sibyllina* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1902), 69–75 and R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, esp. 124–134.

a Ad Autol. 2.3

The first reference of Theophilus (*Ad Autol.* 2.3) to the *Or. Sib.* (fr. ii) is used in a sarcastic polemic meant to ridicule the idolatrous practice of making “gods,” and to downplay “mythological absurdities.” The argument in *Ad Autol.* 2.3 follows three steps: a deconstruction of the opponent’s view on mainly logical grounds, an appeal to the authority of a prophet of their own (the Sibyl), and an affirmation of the superiority of his own faith. Thus, if the gods begot and were begotten, it is natural that there are gods coming into existence up to the present day; therefore, “there should be more gods than men, as the Sibyl says (δὲ καὶ πλείοντες θεοὶ ὠφείλον εἶναι τῶν ἀνθρώπων, ὥς φησιν Σίβυλλα)” (*Ad Autol.* 2.3).¹⁷ The fragment from the *Or. Sib.* (*Or. Sib.* fr. ii)¹⁸ inserted at this point, is meant to support Theophilus’ *reductio ad absurdum*. What follows is a pronouncement of the nature of God, yet in Judeo-Hellenistic terms (Most High, Almighty, self-contained, and ubiquitous), while in the next section Theophilus focuses on polemics against philosophers, poets and historians.

b Ad Autol. 2.9

Theophilus speaks in *Ad Autol.* 2.9 about the prophetic teaching on the creation of the world (as quoted below), followed by a long exegetical passage on the book of Genesis (*Ad Autol.* 2.10–32). While in a previous passage, Theophilus considers “all the historians, poets and philosophers” deceived by being unable to look for the truth in the right way, he also acknowledges that sometimes they can render ideas in agreement with those of the prophets.

The men of God (θεοῦ ἀνθρώποι), who were possessed by a holy spirit (πνεύματος ἁγίου) and became prophets (προφηταὶ γενόμενοι) and were inspired (ἐμπνευσθέντες) and instructed (σοφισθέντες) by God himself, were taught by God and became holy and righteous (ῥεστοὶ καὶ δίκαιοι). For this reason they were judged worthy to receive the reward of becoming instruments of God (ὄργανα θεοῦ γενόμενοι) and containing wisdom (χωρήσαντες σοφίαν) from him. Through wisdom they spoke about the creation of the world (κτίσεως τοῦ κόσμου) and about everything else; for they also prophesied about pestilences and famines and wars. There were not just

17 Greek text and translations from R. Grant, *Theophilus of Antioch. Ad Autolycum* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970).

18 *Or. Sib.* fr. ii: “If gods beget and yet remain immortal/ there would have been more gods born than men,/ and mortals would never ever have a place to stand” (εἰ δὲ θεοὶ γεννώσι καὶ ἀθάνατοί γε μένουσιν,/ πλείονες ἀνθρώπων γεγεννημένοι ἂν θεοὶ ᾗσαν,/ οὐδὲ τόπος στήναι θνητοῖς οὐκ ἂν ποθ’ ὑπῆρξεν).

one or two of them but more at various times and seasons (ἀλλὰ πλείονες κατὰ χρόνους καὶ καιροὺς) among the Hebrews, as well as the Sibyl among the Greeks (παρὰ Ἑλλήσιν Σίβυλλα). All of them were consistent with one another and with themselves (πάντες φίλα ἀλλήλοις καὶ σύμφωνα εἰρήκασιν, τὰ τε πρὸ αὐτῶν γεγενημένα καὶ τὰ κατ' αὐτοὺς γεγονότα), and they described events which had previously occurred, events in their own time, and events which are now being fulfilled in our times. For this reason we are persuaded that their predictions of coming events will prove correct, just as the former events took place exactly.

Ad Autol. 2.9

According to this passage, the prophets are possessed by the *pneuma* and are inspired by God himself, becoming instruments of the divine. Being granted the wisdom, they had access to foreknowing all sorts of concerns of human history. Among the inspired, Theophilus refers to the prophets of the Hebrews (προφῆται), as expected, but also to the Sibyl who is technically a prophetess to the (pagan) Greeks. By linking the Sibyl to the Greeks, Theophilus presents her as an independent, non-Christian witness to the divine revelation, consistent with the Hebrew prophets.

It is not clear, however, whether Theophilus holds the message of the Sibylline Oracles on a par with the prophecies of the Hebrew Bible. On the whole, in *Ad Autol.* 2.10, Theophilus downplays the importance of the inspired and emphasizes the source of their inspiration: “It was [the logos], spirit of God (πνεῦμα θεοῦ) and beginning (ἀρχή) and sophia (σοφία) and power of the most high (δύναμις ὑψίστου), who came down into (κατήρχετο) the prophets and spoke through them about the creation of the world and all the rest.”¹⁹

c *Ad Autol.* 2.37

The next quotation from the *Or. Sib.* can be framed within his exegetical treatment of the book of Genesis, and more precisely, it gives an illustration of the Flood and of the Tower of Babel. In *Ad Autol.* 2.31, the disobedience of men brought about punishment—“from that time he diversified the tongues of men, giving each a different language” (Ἐνήλλαξεν τὰς γλώσσας τῶν ἀνθρώπων, δοὺς ἑκάστῳ διάφορον διάλεκτον)—but also the possibility of repentance as a new beginning after the Flood. Theophilus places in his account of Genesis a passage from the *Or. Sib.*:

19 For a more detailed discussion on Theophilus' theory of passing on inspiration to the prophets, and the role he ascribes to *Sophia*, see R. Rogers, *Theophilus of Antioch*, 82–84, and 136.

The Sibyl indicated these events when she proclaimed that wrath would come to the world. She spoke thus:
 But when the warnings of the great God are accomplished,
 Threats which he then made to mortals, when they built a tower
 In the Assyrian land. They all spoke the same language,
 And they wanted to ascend into the starry heaven.
 Straightway the Immortal laid strong necessity
 Upon the winds; straightway then the winds the great tower from above
 Cast down, and roused strife among mortals [= *Or. Sib.* 3.97–103]
 Straightway when the tower fell, the tongues of men [= *Or. Sib.* 3.105]
 Were divided into many languages of mortals [= *Or. Sib.* 8.5].²⁰

This is a complex manner of quoting the *Or. Sib.* in that Theophilus adds two further verses, one from the third and the other from the eighth book of *Or. Sib.* The Babel tower story appears in Genesis and in *Or. Sib.* 3.97–104, both seemingly known to Theophilus. In *Ad Autolycum* 2.31, the *Or. Sib.* narrative is brought in to illustrate and to confirm the Genesis account.

We read in these verses that after the Flood, people had started to build a tower in the Assyrian land. Moreover, there is another passage in *Or. Sib.* 3.809–810 where the Sibyl herself is said to “have left the long Babylonian walls of Assyria, frenzied, a fire sent to Greece, prophesizing the disclosures of God to all mortals.” Since there is no further reference in *Ad Autol.* 2.31, it is impossible to tell whether Theophilus knew *Or. Sib.* 3.809–810, or the tradition according to which God appointed the Sibyl to leave the Babylonian walls and to prophesize to the Greeks. If he did so, he might have indeed inferred the label of the Sibyl as “prophetess for the Greeks and for other nations,” after having read her linkage with Babylon.²¹

Up until now, the use of the *Or. Sib.* in *Ad Autolycum* might suggest that the Sibyl is considered prophetess to the Greeks in that she speaks to them of biblical issues. However, Theophilus does not clarify whether or not he holds as divinely inspired all of Sibyl’s prophecies. This possibility is kept open by the fact that in 2.9 he also holds that all the inspired are consistent in themselves

20 These parallels are discussed in Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 73–75.

21 R. Buitenwerf demonstrates that “whenever the Sibyl mentions an episode which took place before she was sent to Greece, the past tense is used, whereas the future tense is used for later events.” See R. Buitenwerf, “The Identity of the Prophetess Sibyl in the Sibylline Oracles III,” in *Prophets and Prophecy in Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, eds J. Verheyden, K. Zamfir, and T. Nicklas, WUNT 11 286 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 41–55, esp, 45–46.

and with one another. One should add that the Sibyl does not enter the gallery of those pagan “authors” who have stolen knowledge from the Scriptures (cf. *Ad Autol.* 2.37), but she has direct access to the truth (cf. *Ad Autol.* 2.9), and becomes trustworthy and entitled to proclaim “that wrath would come to the world (ὁργὴν τῷ κόσμῳ μέλλειν ἔρχεσθαι)” (*Ad. Autol.* 2.31).

d *Ad Autol.* 2.36

In *Ad Autol.* 2.36 Theophilus commends not only the study of historical texts, or of the Old Testament characters (Moses, David, Habakkuk), but also of the Sibyl. He quotes successively *Or. Sib.* fr. i and *Or. Sib.* fr. iii, after a sequence in which he has stressed how harmoniously and consistently all the Hebrew prophets spoke.²²

The Sibyl is then introduced as Greek prophetess as follows: “And the Sibyl, who was a prophetess for the Greeks and the other nations (ἐν Ἑλλήσιν καὶ ἐν τοῖς λοιποῖς), rebukes the human race at the beginning of her prophecy (ἐν ἀρχῇ τῆς προφητείας αὐτῆς), saying (...).” The fragment quoted in 2.36 exhibits (in 35 verses) roughly two important themes: an affirmation of monotheism, and a warning of the divine judgment and punishment. This too is paralleled in the previous chapter (2.35), with regard to Hebrew prophets. Theophilus gives full voice to the Sibyl and lets her affirm the statements of monotheism without adding Christian elements, or flavouring the Sibyl’s speech with any Christological concepts. The second fragment (49 verses) is introduced as follows: “And in regard to those [gods] who are called created, she said.” This quotation also deals with monotheism, and in particular, it denounces false deifications, gods made by man. The quotation is followed by a conclusion: “Now that these statements are true and useful and just and lovely is obvious to all men ...” (2.36).

In light of this, the function of the Sibyl is to establish common ground with the Greek pagan, in which the latter can see the will of God at work, stressing both its monotheistic character and the falsity of other gods made by man. It is in this context that his view of the Sibyl as the Greek prophetess—vessel of the spirit of God, in harmony and consistent with the Hebrew prophets—is best understood.

22 There is an emphasis not only on the continuity, but also on the universality of truth (cf. *Ad Autol.* 2.9). Preserving her as a prophetess “for the Greeks” (in line with the previous apologists) and “for other nations,” Theophilus gives her universality and it is only on account of this “given” that she pertains to the “people of God.” See Rogers, *Theophilus of Antioch*, 135.

Clement of Alexandria's *Paedagogus*, *Protrepticus* and *Stromata*

As Drobner shows, Clement devoted his works “to proclaiming to the rich and highly cultured upper strata of Alexandria a progressive and superior religion.”²³ Finding biblical support, Clement accommodates Hellenistic vocabulary and motifs, and portrays with the help of any sort of material he has at hand the core and the *telos* of the Christian life. In doing so, he has the deserved reputation of being the Church Father who most frequently refers to non-Christian sources.²⁴

Clement speaks of nine prophetesses, and he seems to have known both Varro's and Pausanias' accounts.²⁵ In a rather chaotic way, he offers his readers all sorts of examples of places and names of Sibyls: “the Hebrew prophetess” (*Protr.* 6.71.4), “the Phrygian ... called Artemis,” “the Egyptian Sibyl, and the Italian who inhabited the Carmentale in Rome” (*Strom.* 1.21.108). Interestingly, Clement also refers to Heraclides of Pontus, who is thought to have been the first author to distinguish between various Sibyls.²⁶ The passage from *Strom.* 1.21 reads: “There is another one [Sibyl], also from Erythrai, called Herophile. Heraclides of Pontus mentioned these in Περὶ χρηστηρίων” (1.21.108).²⁷ Clement also knows the Sibyl from Helicon and (or) from Milea (*Strom.* 1.15.70), and mentions in passing “the crowd of Sibyls: the Samian, the Colophonian, the Cumaean, the Erythraean, Phyto, Taraxandra, the Macedonian, the Thessalian, the Thesprotian (*Strom.* 1.21.132).”²⁸

He is also the first Christian author who seems to have known *Or. Sib.* 3, 4, 5, and fr. i. altogether, which helps us establish their *terminus ante quem* no later than the end of the second century or the beginning of the third.²⁹ Briefly, in *Paed.*,³⁰ addressed to novices in Christianity, the Sibyl is addressed twice (2.10.98.3 and 3.3.15.2), and depicted as a pagan prophetess; in *Protr.*, directed

23 H. Drobner, *The Fathers of the Church* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 132.

24 H. Fiskå Hägg, “Clement and Alexandrian Christianity,” in *The Routledge Companion to Early Christian Thought*, ed. by Jeffrey Bingham (New York: Routledge, 2010), 179.

25 H.W. Parke, *Sibylline Prophecy*, 46.

26 H.W. Parke, *Sibylline Prophecy*, 46.

27 R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 95; Parke, *Sibylline Prophecy*, 26–27.

28 H.W. Parke, *Sibylline Prophecy*, 46.

29 R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 77.

30 For the Greek text I will be using the SC editions: C. Mondésert and André Plassart, eds., *Clément d'Alexandrie. Le protreptique*, SC 2 (Paris: Cerf, 1976); C. Mondésert and H.-I. Marrou, eds., *Clément d'Alexandrie. Le Pédagogue*, SC 108, SC 158 (Paris: Cerf, 1965, 1970); C. Mondésert, A. Le Boulluec, and P. Descourtieux, eds., *Clément d'Alexandrie. Les Stromates*, SC 30, SC 278–279, SC 446 (Paris: Cerf, 1951, 2006, 1999). For the English trans-

mainly to the non-Christians as an exhortation to adhere to the Christian faith, the Sibyl is brought to the fore more extensively and envisaged as a prophetess of God; in *Strom.* the picture of the Sibyl is more ambiguous, since she is neighbored twice with the pagan philosophers, and once with Deuteronomy.³¹ In what follows we will mainly distinguish between two thematic sets: on the one hand, (a) the passages in which the Sibyl appears well at home in her Greek dress, and on the other hand (b) the passages in which Clement frames the prophetess in a Jewish-Christian perspective.

a *Prophetess of Greek Descent*

First, it is not uncommon for Clement to associate the Sibyl with distinguished Greek characters. In *Strom.* 1.15.70.3, after walking in the footsteps of Plato and the Pythagoreans, the Sibyl is said (via Heraclides) to have been granted divine rather than human inspiration (οὐκ ἀνθρωπίνως, ἀλλὰ σὺν θεῷ (τὸ) μέλλον Σιβύλλῃ πεφάνθαι). She is also considered to have come from the Helicon where she was brought up by the Muses (ἐκ τοῦ Ἑλικῶνος παραγενομένην ὑπὸ τῶν Μουσῶν τραφεῖσαν), with no end to her prophesizing—ἀέρα χωρήσαν αὐτῆς μετὰ τελευτήν (*Strom.* 1.15.70.4).

Elsewhere, in defence of the universality of the truth, Sibyl and Plato bear truths in harmony with the Christian testimonies, but apart from them: “even Plato spoke about the One and Sole Principle, and the Law” (5.15.115.2), which, according to Clement, was interpreted as “obeying to the will of the One”—νόμος καὶ βουλῇ πείθεσθαι ἐνός (5.15.115.2). The source of their notion of truth (δόξα ἢ ἀληθής) comes ultimately from the Scriptures, to whom the Sibyl is said to subscribe as well: “Behold, he [the One] is clear and unwavering for all” (*Or. Sib.* fr. i. 28) as the Sibyl says” (*Strom.* 5.15.115.6).

In *Paed.* 2.10.98.3, Clement mentions the Sibyllines as part of the Greek world (“one from your poets”), and in *Strom.* 1.21.132 he shows no confidence in her prophecies, taking the liberty to neglect them: “I will keep the silence on the foolishness of the Sibyls.” Elsewhere, Clement places the Sibyl in the row of authors who tend to depreciate humans as mortals (*Strom.* 3.3.14.3), as exemplified in a single line from the *Or. Sib.* frag i. 1 (“You are human, mortal and fleshy, and are nothing”—Ἀνθρωποι θνητοὶ καὶ σάρκινοι, οὐδὲν ἐόντες), and

lation: A. Roberts, J. Donaldson, A.C. Coxe, “Exhortation to the Heathen,” “The Instructor,” and “The Stromata, or Miscellanies,” in *ANF* vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1956—reprinted after the 1985 ed.), 165–568; G.W. Butterworth, *Clement of Alexandria. The Exhortation to the Greeks, The Rich Man’s Salvation, To the Newly Baptized*, LCL (London: Heinemann, 1960).

31 J. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 82–83.

the parallel in Homer's *Odyssey* 18.130: "Earth nurtures nothing feebler than a human being" (*Strom.* 3.3.14.3).

Clement also (approvingly) cites Paul, recommending the reading of Greek books with the Sibyl among them as they may be of help in acquainting pagans with the One God (*Strom.* 6.5.40.1).

For that, as God wished to save the Jews by giving to them prophets, so also by raising up prophets of their own in their own tongue, as they were able to receive God's beneficence, He distinguished the most excellent of the Greeks from the common herd, in addition to "Peter's Preaching," the Apostle Paul will show, saying: "Take also the Hellenic books, read the Sibyl, how it is shown that God is one, and how the future is indicated. And taking Hystaspes, read, and you will find much more luminously and distinctly the Son of God described, and how many kings shall draw up their forces against Christ, hating Him and those that bear His name, and His faithful ones, and His patience, and His coming".

Strom. 6.5.40.1, ANF 2: 490

It seems plain that, since Paul conveys the message about the Sibyl, whom God has chosen as a Hellenic prophetess to teach monotheism, he offers Clement a scriptural basis for his view that God raised prophets to the Greeks from among themselves.³²

b *Prophetess of God*

The second category of passages mirror Clement's treatment of the Sibyl in closer connection to the people of God. Clement's central concern when dealing with the Sibylline oracles lies in emphasizing the authority of the Scriptures, to which, eventually, the Sibyls subscribed. If we have seen the Sibyl aligned with pagan culture in *Paed.* and in some passages from *Strom.*, in *Protr.* she is depicted mainly as a prophetess of the Hebrews, and instructor in matters of ethics and cult practices. In *Protr.* 4.50.1–3, Clement brings in his service oracles of Jewish Egyptian provenance, and wraps up in successive Sibyllinic quotations a diatribe against idolatry.

³² Parke suggests that this attitude of resorting to a scriptural text, which supposedly conveys a positive valuation of these oracles, pertains to "a preliminary stage in the complex process of establishing a selective relationship between Christian revelation and pagan literature," of which Clement would be indicative; H.W. Parke, *Sibylline Prophecy*, 157.

As your instructor I will quote the prophetic Sibyl, “whose words divine come not from Phoebus’ lips,/ that prophet false, by foolish men called god,/ but from great God, whom no man’s hands have made,/ like speechless idols framed from polished stone” [= *Or. Sib.* 4.4–7].

She, however, calls the temples ruins. That of Ephesian Artemis she predicts will be swallowed up by “yawning gulfs and earthquakes” [= *Or. Sib.* 5.294], thus: “Prostrate shall Ephesus groan, when, deep in tears,/ she seeks along her banks a vanished shrine” [= *Or. Sib.* 5.295–296].

That of Isis and Sarapis in Egypt she says will be overthrown and burnt up: “Thrice-wretched Isis, by Nile’s streams thou stayst/ lone, dumb with frenzy on dark Acheron’s sands” [= *Or. Sib.* 5.483–484].

Then lower down: “And thou, Sarapis, piled with useless stones,/ In wretched Egypt liest, a ruin great” [= *Or. Sib.* 5.486–487].³³

Or. Sib. 4 and 5 lash out against the Egyptians for destroying the Jewish temples, and against Rome for destroying the temple of Jerusalem.³⁴ In particular, the Sibyl whom Clement voices here stands over against the pagan shrines in Asia (of Ephesian Artemis) and Egypt (of Isis and Sarapis). Thus, just as the Jewish ‘sibyllist’ employed the ‘prophetess’ to display antipathy towards the pagans and gentile converts to Judaism, Clement seems to lead a similar fight in his time, and the Sibylline quotations serve his condemnation of the evils of idolatry.

In a similar vein with Justin, the Sibyl (named the first among the prophets) does not have the power to speak on her own: when she “sings the song of salvation”—ἁσάτω πρώτη Σίβυλλα τὸ ἄσμα τὸ σωτήριον (*Protr.* 8.77.2)—she does it on the ground of her master’s voice.³⁵ Somewhat peculiar, Clement assigns her the role of ‘instructor’ for a Christian way of life, probably an idea connected with the issue of the transmission of wisdom.³⁶ However, we should not exaggerate the importance Clement ascribes to the Sibyl. For him, she is a valid teacher, instructing that “error is darkness, and that the knowledge of God is light,”³⁷ but not on her own. Similar to what we have previously seen in Theophilus, *Ad Autol.* 2.10, Clement then turns to quotations from the Old

33 Translation from G.W. Butterworth, *Clement of Alexandria. The Exhortation to the Greeks*, 113.

34 J.J. Collins, “Sibylline Oracles,” 391.

35 E. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), 70; Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 84.

36 J. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 63.

37 E. Osborn, *Clement of Alexandria*, 70.

and the New Testament, although, quite characteristically, he still puts together quotations from Homer, Plato, Isaiah, Jeremiah, or the Psalms.

A number of further passages (*Strom.* 1.21.108, *Protr.* 6.70.1–2, *Protr.* 6.71.4, etc.) indicate that Clement sees the Sibyl in a Jewish lineage as well.³⁸ In *Strom.* 1.21.108.1, Clement (re)adduces the issue of primacy closer to a Jewish-Christian framework and indicates that Moses precedes the Greek sages and philosophers and also their gods. Yet, “Moses is not alone, because the Sibyl herself is older than Orpheus” (Καὶ οὐτὶ γε μόνος οὗτος, ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡ Σίβυλλα Ὀρφέως παλαιότερα). It is not clear in the paragraph whether the Sibyl is taken to be following the line of Moses, or being on a par with him. Given the context, it is reasonable to see the Sibyl among “the people of God,” in order to preserve the anteriority to the Greeks.

In *Protr.* 6.70.1, Plato and the Sibyl are thought to derive their knowledge of truth and of divine laws from the Jews. However, as Buitenwerf stresses, the passage opens up to a larger portrayal of how Greek philosophers derived their knowledge and wisdom from the Hebrews, i.e. from “the people of God.”³⁹ The most contentious passage in this sense is *Protr.* 6.71.4 (Πόθεν ἄρα ὁ τοῦ Γρύλλου σοφίζεται ἢ δηλαδὴ παρὰ τῆς προφήτιδος τῆς Ἑβραίων θεσπιζούσης ὧδέ πως), which, according to R. Buitenwerf may be read as:

either

- (1) “But it is not clear that it is only thanks to the prophetess of the Hebrews that the son of Gryllos could speak so clearly? She prophesied as follows;”

or

- (2) “But it is not clear that the son of Gryllos could speak so clearly only thanks to the prophetess (speaking) about the Hebrews, who prophesied the following.”⁴⁰

38 Lightfoot explains that the difficulty stems from the fact that the passages quoted are from a Jewish oracle, and thus, through association, Clement might have thought of the Sibyl as Jewish, instead of Greek. In Lightfoot’s eyes, Clement “has maintained the Jewish view of her, as against other Christian writers;” indeed, the same passages were also referred by Theophilus and Ps.-Justin, who do not take her as Hebrew for that. See J. Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles*, 84; see also Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 76 ff.

39 R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 77.

40 R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 77.

However, from this latter variant, it is unclear whether he leans τῆς Ἑβραίων on the previous genitival form τῆς προφήτιδος, with the function of an explicative Genitive (thus, excluding a Genitive of possession/relationship), or considers it dependent on a verb (and if so, on which verb?); there are no clues that he might favour dependence on the participial form θεσπιζούσης, but he seems indeed to plead for the function of a complement. Buitenwerf's argument is thus only partially laid out, and one could disagree with the translation "about the Hebrews," but there is altogether not sufficient ground to assume that Clement thought Sibyl a Hebrew in the strictest sense. Rather he seems to have used the ambiguity—to which the very nature of the Sibyllines calls for—intentionally,⁴¹ given that at the other end a possible dependence of Plato and the Sibyl on Moses was a way for Clement to save some of the Greek *paideia*, as already rooted in God's revelation.⁴²

To sum up, Clement turns to the Sibyl to gain access to the Greeks due to the common ground it provides (much like the authors above). However, he also seems to take the Sibyl as Hebrew to set her closer to the "people of God." In doing so, he ultimately accommodates his views on the non-Christian prophetess as a way of facilitating his apologetic aims.

Pseudo-Justin Martyr's *Cohortatio Ad Graecos*

One last example is drawn from *Cohortatio ad Graecos*, about which the general consensus seems to be that Justin Martyr is not its author.⁴³ One can infer that

41 Cf. Zeegers-Vander Vorst, *Les citations des poètes grecs*, 205: "En fait, les *Oracles* eux-même prêtaient à confusion. Ils sont juifs parce qu'ils sont composés par un faussaire juif, mais ils sont grecs parce que le faussaire les a rédigés dans une langue qui doit beaucoup à Homère, à Hésiode et aux authentiques oracles grecs."

42 Daniel Ridings, *The Attic Moses. The Dependency Theme in Some Early Christian Writers* (Göteborg: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1995), 52 ff., 63 ff.

43 C. Riedweg, *Ps.-Justin (Markell von Ankyra?), Ad Graecos de vera religione (bisher "Cohortatio ad Graecos")*. *Einleitung und Kommentar* (Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft, 25/1–2), 2 Vols (Basel, Fr. Reinhardt: 1994). See also M. Marcovich, ed., *Pseudo-Iustinus. Cohortatio ad Graecos; De Monarchia; Oratio ad Graecos*, *Patristische Texte und Studien* 32 (Berlin, New York: de Gruyter, 1990), 3. Since its author seems to have used the *Or. Sib.* and the Hermetic writings in the style of Lactantius, rather than that of Clement of Alexandria, *Cohortatio* might have been written before 302 (approximately the year when Lactantius started his *Div. Inst.*). Moreover, it has been also pointed out that Eusebius (*Hist. Eccl.* 4.18.4—καὶ αὐθις ἕτερον πρὸς Ἑλλήνας εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐλήλυθεν αὐτοῦ σύγγραμμα, ὃ καὶ ἐπέγραψεν Ἑλεγχον) mentions the *Cohortatio* among the works

the author was trained in rhetoric. He quotes extensively from Homer, from Orphic verses and four times from the *Or. Sib.* He further refers to the Sibyllines, yet without explicitly introducing them, on three other occasions.⁴⁴

Ps.-Justin introduces these passages as if they were prophesized by an individual, namely, the Sibyl of Cumae. In 16.1,⁴⁵ Ps.-Justin quotes them three times. The first quotation reads as follows:

It is the ancient Sibyl who lived very long ago, whom Plato, Aristotle, and many other writers refer to as a prophetess that teaches you in her oracles about the one and only God. It is necessary to remember. This is what she says: 'There is one God, who rules alone, exceedingly great, unbegotten,/ universal ruler, invisible, who himself sees all things/ He is not seen by any mortal flesh' [= *Or. Sib.* fr. i. 7–9].⁴⁶

After these three lines from *Or. Sib.* fr. i. 7–9, the author of the *Cohortatio* continues: "Then, elsewhere [she says] as follows: 'But we had wondered from the path of the Immortal./ With mindless spirit we revered things made by hand,/ idols and statues of dead men' [= *Or. Sib.* 3.721–723]."

The passage from *Or. Sib.* 3.721–723 is immediately followed by the third quotation, introduced by the words: "And again, this is what she says somewhere else: 'Happy will be those of mankind on earth/ who will love the great God, blessing him/ before drinking and eating, putting their trust in piety./ They will reject all temples when they see them;/ altars too, useless foundations of dumb stones/ defiled with blood of animate creatures, and sacrifices/ of four-footed animals. They will look to the great glory of the one God' [= *Or. Sib.* 4.24–30]."

In an effort to convince his audience about the authenticity of the Sibylline verses, the author reports in some detail that he had visited the sanctuary of Sibyl at the cave in Cumae (*Cohort.* 37.1), where he enjoyed the guidance of the locals throughout the way (οἱ ὥς <τὰ> πάτρια παρειληφότες παρὰ τῶν ἑαυτῶν

attributed to Justin Martyr. It follows that the *Cohortatio* must predate 311/312 CE. See. M. Marcovich, *Cohortatio*, 4.

44 *Cohort.* 16.1—*Or. Sib.* 3.721–723; *Cohort.* 16.1—*Or. Sib.* 4.24–30; *Cohort.* 16.5–7—*Or. Sib.* fr. i. 7–9; *Cohort.* 38.1—*Or. Sib.* 3.24–25; cf. R. Buitenwerf, *Book III of the Sibylline Oracles*, 78. The other passages envisaged stem from chapters 11, 24, 37.

45 For the Greek text, I will be using B. Pouderon, *Pseudo-Justin. Ouvrages apologetiques. Exhortations aux Grecs, Discours aux Grecs, Sur la Monarchie*, SC 528 (Paris: Cerf, 2009), and M. Marcovich, *Cohortatio*.

46 *Or. Sib.* fr. i. 7–9 is also quoted more extensively by Theophilus (*Ad Autol.* 2.36.1–6), and by Clement and Lactantius, cf. Pouderon, *Ps-Justin*, 185.

προγόνων ἔφασκον—*Cohort.* 37.1). He further claims that he was even shown the place where the urn with Sibyl's ashes was kept (καὶ φακόν τινα ἐκ χαλκοῦ κατεσκευασμένον, ἐν ᾧ τὰ λείψανα αὐτῆς σῶζεσθαι—*Cohort.* 37.3).⁴⁷ Moreover, the author of the *Cohortatio* seems to defend the oracles against the accusations of falsity, caused by metric irregularities. In 37.3, he explains that on the one hand, the prophetess does not remember anything of what she has uttered, when the moment of being possessed by divine inspiration has passed, and on the other hand, the scribe himself (ὑπογραφεύς) might have missed the metric accuracy. Ps.-Justin then encourages the Greeks to have confidence in their own oracles (which announced the coming of the Word of God—38.1), and, in particular, in the primeval and the most ancient Sibyl (38.2—πέισθητε ... τῇ ἀρχαιοτάτῃ καὶ σφόδρα παλαιᾷ Σιβύλλῃ) for the sake of their own salvation.

At any rate, in Ps.-Justin's words, the oracles are an exercise in restraint and preparation for understanding the prophecy of saintly men (38.2—"Ἔσται γὰρ ὑμῖν ἀναγκαῖον προγύμνασμα ἢ τούτων γνώσις τῆς τῶν ἱερῶν ἀνδρῶν προφητείας). On this note, the author of the *Cohortatio* delivers once again the key-point of the treatise: in his view, it is only possible to learn about God through the prophets who deliver their knowledge under the effect of divine inspiration. To the extent that the text discloses this, Ps.-Justin situates the Sibyl among the Greeks, next to the poets and philosophers ("your oracles," "the ancient Sibyl," etc.).

In sum, the author of the *Cohortatio*, who seems to have known passages from *Or. Sib. fr. i*, *Or. Sib. 3* and *Or. Sib. 4*, plainly brings the Sibyl into discussion because she is part of the Greek pagan tradition. As a prophetess of old, she is made to corroborate Christian monotheistic claims and to refute idolatry. Her function is therefore to speak of 'Christian' values to the Greeks, from a Greek point of view, and to function as an introduction to the message of the 'holy men.'

Conclusion

Apart from the obvious awareness of the Sibyllinic traditions, the references to the Sibyl in early Christian Greek authors display (in their new contexts) several strategies of approaching the Greeks for apologetic purposes. There is, perhaps unsurprisingly, some oscillation between approving and disproving

47 These sort of details are also found in Pausanias, 10.12.8 (λίθου ὑδρίαν) and Petronius, *Satyr.* 48.8 (in ampulla). Cf. B. Pouderon, *Ps-Justin*, 267; M. Marcovich, *Cohortatio*, 11.

these mythological accounts. Yet for the most part, there is among the Greek apologists a tendency to emphasize and use the link between the Sibyl and the mainstream Hellenistic mythology in an attempt to draw her (and their intended audience) closer to the world to which they pertain. In addition, Clement also places her in the vicinity of the Jewish prophets for the same purposes. Clearly, the apologists counted on the social and cultural context of the Sibylline oracles, as they perceived them. It is worth stressing in conclusion that this ultimately implied an intentional elevation of the authority of the Sibyl on the part of the Greek apologists (the clearest example is perhaps Ps.-Justin) in a mixture of Scriptural, pseudepigraphical, oracular and philosophical arguments.

The Early Christian Martyrdom Narratives: Narrative Features, Intertextuality and the Authoritative Texts Behind

Marijana Vuković

The torments that Christian martyrs were put through in the initial centuries of Christianity, which consequently led many of them to death, were documented in martyrdom narratives. These narratives loomed as a testimony of the mishap. As Maureen Tilley argues, “they were memorials to the courage of those who preferred death to apostasy.”¹ They honored the martyrs’ faith, for which martyrs sacrificed their lives. Yet, although martyrdom narratives are among the first hagiographical writings that promote saintly characters within Christianity (they come forth already from the second century CE), they present a genre time and again called “problematic.”²

Numerous ambiguous issues open to question related to these narratives caused disinclination of scholars to get to grips with them. To name some, martyrdom narratives are to the most part bereft of authorship. Imprecise dating and the questionable authenticity of some of the narratives further embroils the answer as to the body of this literature. It is indefinite as to when this literature evanesces and transforms into other forms. Additionally, scholars are nowadays hesitant about the inclusion of martyrdom narratives in hagiography.³ Ultimately, scholars do not employ the set term for the genre designation.

1 M. Tilley, “Scripture as an Element of Social Control: Two Martyr Stories of Christian North Africa,” *The Harvard Theological Review* 83, No. 4 (1990): 383–397.

2 See C.R. Moss, *The Other Christs: Imitating Jesus in Ancient Christian Ideologies of Martyrdom* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 3–18. See also D. Loades, “Introduction,” in *Martyrs and Martyrologies*, ed. D. Wood (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1993), xv.

3 Many scholars do not see martyrdom literature as part of hagiography and consequently many studies on hagiography do not include martyrdom narratives. In her article on martyr passions in the *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, Susan Harvey admits that a large number of scholars take the *Life of Antony* as a real turning point and the beginning of literary genre of hagiography proper: the saint’s vita. Robert Bartlett has recently reasserted that hagiography was born with the *Life of St Antony* and *Life of St Martin*. Yet, Timothy Barnes makes clear that he employs the term “hagiography” to designate the study of the evidence relating to saints and martyrs, while he exploits martyrdom narratives extensively in his study. The cutting-edge scholarship on Byzantine hagiography, *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography 1*, edited by Stephanos Efthymiadis, excludes early martyrdom narra-

As to the naming, “martyrdom narrative” is a coined novel phrase, which attempts at replacing interim ill-assorted terms for the genre. The phrase stands for what scholars ordinarily address as “the acts and the passions of the martyrs.” The proposed expression implies the ending of a text in a martyr’s death/martyrdom, which is a conventional mannerism of both the acts and the passions of the martyrs. Additionally, it does not necessitate any further distinction between the two.

Previously, scholars ventured on demarcating differentiation between the two groups. Delehayé puts forward that the *acta* contain mainly interrogation, while the *passio* narrates events from the arrest up to the death of a martyr.⁴ Hilhorst relies on several authors in highlighting that the acts/*acta* refer to the trial records on which at least some of the martyrs’ acts were based.⁵ Tilley

tives. Efthymiadis nevertheless includes “passions” as forms of hagiographical narrative in his second volume of the *Ashgate Companion*. Martin Hinterberger also refers to the “passions” as the subgenre of hagiography in the same publication. See S. Efthymiadis, “New Developments in Hagiography: The Rediscovery of Byzantine Hagiography,” in *Hagiography in Byzantium: Literature, Social History and Cult* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2011), 1, 157–171, about the commencement of the hagiographical genre with *The Life of Antony* in the fourth century. See also idem, ed., *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography 1* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Variorum, 2011), 9; idem, “Introduction,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography II: Genres and Contexts*, ed. S. Efthymiadis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 4; G.W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 39; C. Walsh, *The Cult of St Katherine of Alexandria in Early Medieval Europe* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2007), 8–9; M. Van Uytanghe, “L’hagiographie: un ‘genre’ chrétien ou antique tardif?” *Analecta Bollandiana* 111 (1993): 135–188; S.A. Harvey, “Martyr Passions and Hagiography,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, ed. S.A. Harvey and D.G. Hunter (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 608; T.D. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010), 1x; R. Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things? Saints and Worshippers from the Martyrs to the Reformation* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013), 19–22; M. Hinterberger, “Byzantine Hagiography and its Literary Genres. Some Critical Observations,” in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Byzantine Hagiography II: Genres and Contexts*, ed. S. Efthymiadis (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2014), 28.

4 H. Delehayé, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1966), 173.

5 See A. Hilhorst, “The Apocryphal Acts as Martyrdom Texts: The Case of the *Acts of Andrew*,” in *The Apocryphal Acts of John*, ed. J.N. Bremmer (Kampen: Pharos, 1995), 1–14. See also H. Leclercq, “Actes des martyrs,” in *Dictionnaire d’archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie* 1, ed. F. Cabrol and H. Leclercq (Paris: Letouzey et Ané, 1907); Delehayé, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*; G. Lanata, *Gli atti dei martiri come documenti processuali* (Milan, 1973); G.A. Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts of Martyrs and Commentarii* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988); Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*.

repeats that the acts focus on interrogation and are grounded in the minutes of the trials. She parts from Delehay's definition of passions, asserting that they focus on the suffering, tortures and death of a martyr.⁶ She complains to the disadvantages of too strict a dichotomy between the acts and the passions—there are simply too many pieces, which do not neatly fit either category. She rounds off by stating that there cannot be a simple divide between the two.⁷ In accord with her claim, the division between the acts and the passions is to be disregarded, while these narratives are to be named by a general term, affiliated with the common event—martyrdom—appearing at the end of the narratives.

The deficiency and the occasional inadequacy of the critical editions present another problem in studying martyrdom literature. Scholars rely on the extant editions or alternatively turn to the surviving, yet far-off manuscripts. More than seventy volumes of the *Acta Sanctorum*, the vast Bollandist collection, contain martyrdom narratives among the other texts associated with saints. However, the texts in the *Acta Sanctorum* are at times based on a very few and uncharacteristic manuscripts.

As to the editions of the martyrdom narratives, several publications came forth in between Ruinart's *Acta primorum martyrum sincera et selecta* in 1689 and Musurillo's *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* in 1972.⁸ While the editors, accounting for the reliability and historical veracity of the texts, pledged authenticity of the collections, the selection of the redacted martyrdom narratives meanwhile has been downsized from the former to the latter collection. The complete and full body of authentic texts is still an ill-defined issue. As a result, scholars create their own lists of the authentic martyrdoms. Delehay offered his own concise slant of authentic texts.⁹ Elliot alluded to some seventy authentic martyrdoms, on the basis of the writings of Lot.¹⁰ In the cutting-edge scholarship on martyrdom narratives, such as in Candida Moss' *The Other*

6 M. Tilley, *Donatist Martyr Stories. The Church in Conflict in Roman North Africa* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1996), xx.

7 Tilley, *Donatist Martyr Stories*, xxi.

8 T. Ruinart, *Acta primorum martyrum sincera et selecta* (Paris, 1689); H. Musurillo, *The Acts of the Christian Martyrs* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972).

9 Polycarp, Pionius, Scillitan martyrs, Justin, Perpetua and Felicitas, Montanus and Lucius, Cyprian, Letter to the Churches of Lyon and Vienne, Maximilian, Crispina, Carpus, Papyrus and Agathonike. See Delehay, *Les Passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires*, 11–182.

10 A.G. Elliott, *Roads to Paradise. Reading the Lives of the Early Saints* (Hannover and London: University Press of New England, 1987), 25, n. 30; F. Lot, *The End of the Ancient World and the Beginnings of the Middle Ages* (London: Kegan Paul, 1931), 162.

Christs, the collections of Ruinart, but also of von Gebhardt and von Harnack,¹¹ are said to have established a small canon of the generally historically reliable texts.¹² This author herself employs the string of martyrdom narratives that accords with the above-said compilations.

But, even when a text is attested as authentic and reliable in all the above-said collections, its textual variants recorded by different hagiographical numbers (BHG, BHL, BHO, etc.) nevertheless diverge and make a difference. The textual variants within the same hagiographical number in the manuscripts, as well as the textual variants in different languages, only amplify varieties. To illustrate some of these perplexities, *The Acts of Cyprian* is considered an objective martyrdom account devoid of embroidery, fashioned on the model of the proconsular acts.¹³ Yet, it is a composite text, with at least three distinct layers.¹⁴ The enormous interest in rewriting *The Acts of Cyprian* existed throughout; namely, thirty-four versions with different BHL numbers of the text survive. This number indicates the existence of at least that many Latin manuscript copies, although the number of manuscripts is often higher. In addition, this calculation does not consider either translations of martyrdom narratives into other languages or their manuscript copies. Similarly, *The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* is said to be the piece written by three authors.¹⁵ The part of the text that runs in the first person singular, Perpetua's "diary,"¹⁶ is believed to be an older layer of the text.¹⁷ The narrative is built upon the later layers of the text embedded in the earlier layers. There are five BHL numbers of this text.

The extensive project, which might upgrade further research in the field and capacitate clearing up somewhat of the problematical issues attached to studying martyrdom literature has been instigated by Guy Philippart.¹⁸ Namely, he

11 O. von Gebhardt, *Acta martyrum selecta. Ausgewählte Märtyreracten, und andere Urkunden aus der Verfolgungszeit der christlichen Kirche* (Berlin: A. Duncker, 1902). Adolf von Harnack worked on the second volume of this collection.

12 Moss, *The Other Christs*, 9.

13 Musurillo, *The Acts*, xxxi.

14 H. Delehay, *The Legends of the Saints*, tr. D. Attwater (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 112. Musurillo, *The Acts*, xxx.

15 R.D. Butler, *The New Prophecy and 'New Visions': Evidence of Montanism in The Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), 49.

16 Butler, *Evidence of Montanism*, 1.

17 Musurillo, *The Acts*, xxvii.

18 G. Philippart and M. Trigalet, "Hagiographies. Chronologie de l'hagiographie latine," http://www.fundp.ac.be/philo_lettres/histoire/h2220.htm (1 October 2011).

publicized a database of Latin medieval hagiographical texts, including martyrdom narratives, along with their dating and BHL numbers.¹⁹ The dating was a segment of the project, within which he enacted the integral corpus of Latin hagiographical literature from 200 CE–1500 CE, along with the place names, genre of hagiographical works, libraries, copyists, addressees and translators of works.²⁰ The martyrdom narratives are sometimes not dated precisely but within a range of years. The few that are dated precisely will be discussed in what follows.

The earliest dated martyrdom narrative according to this database is *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* (BHL 7527–7529), dated to 180 CE. *The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* (BHL 6633, 6634 and 6635) is dated to 203 CE. *The Martyrdom of Celerinus from Carthage* (BHL 1719) is dated to 201–258 CE. *The Acts of Cyprian*, the bishop of Carthage (BHL 2037, 2037a), is dated to 258 CE. *The Martyrdom of Mappalicus and Companions from Africa* (BHL 5221) is dated to 251–258 CE. *The Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius* (BHL 6009) is dated to 259 CE, while *The Martyrdom of Fructuosus and Companions* (BHL 3196) is dated to 260–268 CE.

In the group of the narratives dated to 284–305 CE we find *The Martyrdom of Crispina* (BHL 1989, 1989a, 1989b), *The Martyrdom of Saturninus, Felix, Dativus, Ampelius from Carthage* (BHL 7492), *The Martyrdom of Marcellus from Mauretania* (BHL 5253, 5254), *The Martyrdom of Maximilianus of Thebesta* (BHL 5813). *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus, bishop of Sirmium* (BHL 4466) is dated to 304 CE. *The Martyrdom of Felix* (BHL 2894, 2894a, 2895) is dated to 305 CE, while *The Martyrdom of Serenus of Sirmium* (BHL 7595, 7596) is dated to 293–305 CE.

This slant incorporates some common, but also other uncommonly examined narratives. I will use several of the commonly studied narratives in the following analysis.²¹ My aim is not to protract further discussion of their authenticity and dating. I would propose, first of all, perusing the sought-after question of the characteristic narrative features of the early martyrdom narratives, while relying on Philippart's dating.²² Secondly, I will examine intertextual relations

19 For the methods of establishing evidence, see G. Philippart and M. Trigalet, "Latin Hagiography before the Ninth Century: A Synoptic View," in *The Long Morning of Medieval Europe: New Directions in Early Medieval Studies*, ed. J.R. Davis, and M. McCormick (Burlington, USA: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 114–116.

20 Philippart and Trigalet, "Latin Hagiography," 111.

21 In this article, I use Musurillo's edition, as it is the latest edition, which incorporates and consults several previous editions, as well as a number of manuscripts.

22 It needs to be stressed that the study of the features of the early martyrdom narratives completely diminishes the division into originally Greek and Latin texts. First of all, at

of the early martyrdom narratives with other different narratives for the purpose of establishing their interdependence. Such a two-fold analysis will enable conclusions on the authoritative texts of the early martyrdom narratives. The conclusions about the authoritative texts behind them will be drawn with the help of Bakhtin's theory of inclusive and exclusive genres.

Philippart's database demonstrates that martyrdom narratives keep a low profile in the second and third centuries. By the mid-fourth century, their number gradually dilates and they increasingly proliferate in the fifth and sixth centuries. While not debating the grounds for changes in the emergence of martyrdom narratives, this article will burrow into scrutinizing narrative features and intertextual relations of the martyrdom narratives from the second to the early fourth centuries (the above-called early martyrdom narratives) and juxtapose them to the narrative features of the narratives begetting after the mid-fourth century. I will argue that a significant narratological and intertextual transformation occurs in between, which brings along the different authoritative texts behind them.

Narrative Features of the Early Martyrdom Narratives

Narrative features apply to the textual form and the elements of the *fabula*.²³ The elements of the *fabula* further postulate selected events of the narrative and their narrative duration. Duration is the amount of time covered by the *fabula*, juxtaposed to the amount of space in the text that each event requires: the number of pages, lines, or words.²⁴ It is an "attention paid" to particular segments or topics within the *fabula*.²⁵ The length of different events within a text further highlights their importance within the *fabula*. Such an approach explicates a coveted question of structure and transformation of the *fabula* in the early martyrdom narratives. The narrative features have been discussed in the several works of scholarship in the past.²⁶

this time, they still operated under similar influences. Secondly, going into detail over the question of the original language of each text is another painstaking, yet, in this case, unnecessary issue.

23 See M. Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1997).

24 Bal, *Narratology*, 100.

25 Bal, *Narratology*, 101.

26 See Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*; C.F. Altman, "Two Types of Opposition and the Structure of Latin Saints' Lives," *Medievalia et Humanistica* 6 (1975), 1–11; M.W. Dickie, "Narrative-

The *fabula* of the earliest martyrdom narratives consists of a martyr or a group of martyrs being sought by the Roman authorities, followed up by a martyr being caught, imprisoned, put on trial, convicted and persecuted. This *fabula* is attested in all of the securely dated early texts. The trial scene presents the core event and its duration in the narratives is normally paramount. It is associated with the original reports from the trials, which are nowadays lost.²⁷ According to Barnes,

The court protocols had four different sections. After the introductory formula (the name and the title of the official who presided over the case, the date and location of the hearing, the names of the parties in case), there follows the body of the trial: each speaker is identified and described on his first appearance, and then there may be some brief intermediate narrative passages. The record of the proceedings ends with the decision rendered by the presiding governor or official.²⁸

When the court protocols were turned into narratives, the dialogue between the persecutors and martyrs retained the earliest layer of the text. This dialogue form is attested in the earliest martyrdom narrative, *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, dated to 180 CE. Its basic *fabula* is imbued with dialogues, which take up almost all of this short narrative. In fact, this narrative hardly presents more than a sequence of questions and answers between a proconsul and would-be martyrs. The dialogue form gradually turns into indirect speech in the later martyrdom narratives. In *The Acts of Cyprian*, dated to 258 CE, the dialogue is intertwined with indirect speech and takes up approximately half of the narrative. In *The Martyrdom of Crispina* and *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus*, dialogues are prevailing. It is known that early martyrdom narratives were rewritten among other hagiographies to the advantage of stylistic improvement and adjustment to the contemporary audience in the tenth- and the eleventh-century Byzantium; dialogues were then replaced by a retelling with use of indirect speech.²⁹

Yet, Barnes argues that protocol style provided no guarantee of authenticity, historicity, or derivation from an official documentary record, while the writers of hagiographical fiction quickly learned how to use it in order to lend the

patterns in Christian Hagiography," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 40, No. 1 (1999), 83–98.

27 Delehay, *The Legends*, 111.

28 Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Roman History*, 56–57.

29 See C. Høgel, *Symeon Metaphrastes: Rewriting and Canonization* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2002).

bogus air of authenticity to accounts of trial.³⁰ Nevertheless, it is significant to acknowledge the dialogue form as an early feature, which was further taken over and exerted in the later narratives.

Another protocol-related feature is the opening sentence, which dates the event, and announces the authority, usually the consulship: "In the consulship of x and y, on the 17th of July (e.g.), there were arraigned at Carthage (e.g.) in the governor's (e.g.) chamber x, y, and z, the future martyrs." Such sentence can still be found in *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs*, *The Acts of Cyprian*, *The Martyrdom of Crispina*, and *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus*. In the processes of rewriting, such an opening sentence is later usually ousted. Also, it was far better preserved in the Latin martyrdom narratives than in the Greek narratives.

The tone of the conversation between the martyrs and the persecutors in *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* is strikingly neutral and free from emotions. An author addresses no judgment whatsoever to the Roman authorities for condemning martyrs to death. The proconsul's persuasion of martyrs to sacrifice is dispassionate. Both sides, therefore, maintain an impartial conversational tone. Elliott also argued that, "in comparison to the later hagiographical documents, the official *acta* are almost wholly devoid of emotion or rhetoric."³¹ The neutral tone is additionally attested in Eusebius' *Church History*, which preserves the testimonies written before the cease of the persecutions.³²

In *The Acts of Cyprian*, Cyprian's utterances reveal his indifference. The proconsul certainly speaks more than the martyr, while keeping the emotional tone off almost until the end of the narrative. But, when the proconsul is about to read the decision from the tablet, he reads it "with difficulty and reluctance."³³ Such an element vanishes from martyrdom narratives shortly and is to be replaced by the eagerness of Roman authorities to perform martyrdom. In *The Acts of Cyprian*, the martyr urges the persecutors to conduct the act of the persecution.³⁴

In *The Martyrdom of Crispina*, the martyr stays calm and utters moralizing answers during the interrogation of the Roman officials. The persecutor loses his patience and calls her stubborn and insolent.³⁵ He persists in persuasion, threats, and then turns to offering her various benefits of the earthly life in return for her sacrifice to the pagan gods. While maintaining her integrity,

30 Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 58.

31 Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, 25.

32 Eusebius, *Church History*, 7.11.6–11. See Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 54–58.

33 Musurillo, *The Acts*, 173.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid, 303.

Crispina does not have any space to urge the persecutors to conduct martyrdom. This narrative demonstrates progress towards the faster conversational dynamics, but is also characterized by more confrontational and direct provocations and an increased emotional tone. It manifests the direction of the transformation of the early martyrdom narratives; while persecutors openly provoke and fall into different emotional conditions, martyrs stay undaunted. This transformation already explicates the attitude of an author and reflects the focalization of the narrative.

In *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus*, the same conversational situation is rehearsed repeatedly. Irenaeus is allowed some space to urge the persecutors to conduct the persecution.³⁶ Even the somewhat specific and peculiar *Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* displays the neutrality of the would-be martyrs towards the Roman authorities. The loss of this element is obvious in the later martyrdom narratives and in the rewritings of the earlier martyrdom narratives. While martyrs become bold, daring, and proud of their deeds, Roman officials turn into monsters, eager to perform martyrdom.

In the early martyrdom narratives, the texts gradually expand towards giving space to the martyrs' pre-mortem rituals. *The Acts of the Scillitan Martyrs* presents the martyrs prior to being sacrificed thanking God for becoming "the martyrs in heaven."³⁷ In *The Acts of Cyprian*, a more detailed description follows; Cyprian removes his garment, prostrates it on the ground, binds his eyes and utters a prayer on his knees in a short sentence. In *The Martyrdom of Crispina*, she thanks God in two sentences, makes a sign of the cross and submits her neck to the sword. In *The Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius*, Montanus raises his hands, prays, ties his eyes and kneels down, like Cyprian.³⁸ Irenaeus similarly takes off his garment, raises his palms towards heaven and utters a prayer, which is significantly longer than Cyprian's and the Scillitan martyrs' "Thanks be to God!" Disregarding ritual at this time, a clear tendency of extending the monologue of a martyr prior to execution was a safe way to communicate to the audience, as yet another narratological tool.

Needless to say, there is no hint of the martyrs' suffering in the death scenes of the early martyrdom narratives. Authors insist that Christian martyrs are unaffected by torture and insensitive to pain.³⁹ In the later martyrdom narratives, suffering is described as if seen through the eyes of a reader and not felt

36 Musurillo, *The Acts*, 299.

37 Musurillo, *The Acts*, 89.

38 Musurillo, *The Acts*, 229.

39 L.S. Cobb, *Dying to Be Men. Gender and Language in Early Christian Martyr Texts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), 10.

by a martyr. Suffering is mentioned in *The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas* through the suffering of her family. The family grievance appears in the *Martyrdom of Irenaeus*. The later martyrdom narratives will emphasize the pride of a family in the scenes of martyrdom.

With *The Acts of Cyprian*, dated to 258 CE, some narratological novelties emanate. Namely, narratives with the martyr figures in ecclesiastical positions (bishops, deacons, etc.) increasingly appear from the third century CE. Such titles were almost ensuring success of a narrative. Tilley excellently noticed that the third-century Christian communities already understood the nature of persecution, but needed to be sure which leaders to follow.⁴⁰ Therefore, the martyrdom narratives come almost as propagandistic pamphlets at this time. The description of death of a Christian bishop, which appears in *The Acts of Cyprian*, also emerges in *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*,⁴¹ *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus*, and *The Martyrdom of Felix the Bishop*. *The Martyrdom of Montanus and Lucius* is yet another account of the execution of clergy.⁴²

There are several narrative elements associated with the endings of the martyrdom narratives. They concern the existence of the bodily remains (relics), the cult, and the general post-mortem state of affairs. In *The Acts of Cyprian*, precise information of the location of Cyprian's tomb indicates the importance of his posthumous whereabouts for potential readers/listeners of the narrative. Also, the ending of *The Martyrdom of Crispina* gives information of the date and the place of her martyrdom, followed by a prayer, the feature that ordinarily relates to a narrative that is part of a calendar collection.

40 M. Tilley, *The Bible in Christian North Africa: The Donatist World* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 50.

41 *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* is a much debated and intriguing text. Although it is somewhat lengthier narrative, its *fabula* comes down to the following: introduction—Polycarp is sought for—Polycarp is arrested—dialogue and trial—punishment—miracle—death—burial and cult place—closing remarks. While Polycarp was mentioned even in the writings of Irenaeus of Lyon and Justin Martyr, as well as in Eusebius' *Church History*, and while many scholars considered *The Martyrdom of Polycarp* to be the first martyrdom narrative, Phillipart dates some of its twenty-two versions of the narrative only as early as 400 CE. His dating supports the view of Candida R. Moss that this narrative has not been one of the earliest. Such dating also explains why this narrative contains some additional events, like miracles. For the numerous debates on this text, see Delehay, *The Legends*, 24; idem, *Les passions*, 11–29; T.D. Barnes, "Pre-Decian Acta Martyrum," *Journal of Theological Studies* 19 (1968): 509–531; idem, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 367–378; C.R. Moss, "On the Dating of Polycarp: Rethinking the Place of the Martyrdom of Polycarp in the History of Christianity," *Early Christianity* 1, No. 4 (2010): 539–574.

42 Musurillo, *The Acts*, xxxiv.

Among the narratives that Philippart dates as early, there are a few peculiar works, somewhat out-of-the-way, one of which is *The Martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicitas*. While Philippart dates this narrative to 203 CE, and while Musurillo notes that this text is the prototypical martyrdom, it as yet contains numerous narratological embellishments characteristic of apocalyptic literature.⁴³ Barnes calls this text a “literary passion.”⁴⁴ The narrative resembles *The Apocalypse of John* and *The Shepherd of Hermas*, contains visions, angels, and eschatological allusions, additional to very little of the dialogues characteristic of the early texts. What might betray the early date of this narrative are very neutral and scarce dialogues of martyrs with the Roman authorities. As this text is heavily imbued with apocalyptic thought, it alludes to the possibility that some of the early martyrdom narratives were, although rarely, open to the inclusion of other genre types within their narratives.

Otherwise, one is bewildered by the displayed recurrence of events and the adherence to echoing *fabula* of the early martyrdom narratives, when taken into consideration that authors wrote the texts for the sake of edification and religious purposes,⁴⁵ and not having the rules of genre in mind. However, scholars have already buttressed the analogies among many hagiographical narratives as indeed remarkable. With little or no alteration, the identical story could have been told of two distinct saints.⁴⁶ The early martyrdom narratives assert a large extent of genre exclusiveness, with few and far between influences from other genres. The above-said examples additionally manifest that the early martyrdom narratives were restyled to some degree in the period from the second to the fourth centuries. The change of the martyrdom narratives led from the court-style reports to the literary forms proper. However, this change conceded to hardly anything else but the influences from the same genre type.

Transformation of the Martyrdom Narratives

However, the larger-scale transformation of the narrative form and the elements of the *fabula* of the martyrdom narratives was about to commence. This transformation and its dating are generally unsettled issues among scholars nowadays. Elliott and Hilhorst both assign the transformation of the martyrdom narratives after the peace of Constantine, when the Christian church was

43 Butler, *Evidence of Montanism*, 45; Musurillo, *The Acts*, xxv.

44 Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 66–67.

45 Delehaye, *Legends*, 2.

46 Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, 4.

recognized by the Roman Empire.⁴⁷ Barnes also fixes the period of the change to the cessation of the persecutions, at the beginning of the fourth century.⁴⁸ Therefore, they amend the dating of Delehaye, who assigns it to the period “long after the persecutions.”⁴⁹

As to the rationale behind the transformation, Delehaye ratifies authors’ need to rely on the distant memories about martyrs in their consequent production of the fictional narratives. He disapproved of authors’ sole concern with the literary effectiveness and less consideration paid to factual truth and exactness,⁵⁰ but such a judgment was a reflection of his focalization and concern for the veracity and authenticity of the narratives. Elliott assumes that the later martyrdom narratives were based largely on oral traditions, since many Christian documents were destroyed during the persecution of Diocletian.⁵¹ Her presumption of the posterior genuine interest in the preservation of memory of the fallen persecuted heroes looms through. Hilhorst notices that the distortion of truth characteristic of the later martyrdom narratives reappears in the rewritings of the earlier martyrdom narratives as well.⁵² While the motives behind the distortion of factual in the narratives present an interesting line of inquiry, the resolution of such issue seems far-flung at the moment.

The general proliferation of the Christian hagiographical narratives from the fourth century, which is demonstrated by Philippart’s database, was embodied through several partially overlapping and interdependent streams of narration. On the one hand, the newfangled *fabulae* were inaugurated in the lives of saints. The emerging lives of saints venerate novel Christian characters within their narratives—hermits, ascetics, widows, bishops, presbyters, abbots, monks, military saints, transvestite saints, holy fools, stylites, etc. On the other hand, the well-known, conventional characters—martyrs—do not ebb from the hagiographical scene. They keep on appearing but in somewhat altered martyrdom narratives.

The twofold tracks of narration in the martyrdom narratives come into view at this time. While the new martyrdom narratives are concocted continually, rewriting of the earlier martyrdom narratives also ensues. As the processes of

47 A. Hilhorst, “The Apocryphal Acts as Martyrdom Texts: The Case of the *Acts of Andrew*,” in *The Apocryphal Acts of John*, ed. J.N. Bremmer (Kampen: Pharos, 1995), 3.

48 Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 154.

49 Delehaye, *The Legends*, 12–39.

50 Delehaye, *The Legends*, 12–39.

51 Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, 26.

52 Hilhorst, “The Apocryphal Acts,” 13–14.

metaphrasis are the elephantine subject *per se*, I will catechize in what follows merely the advancement of the new martyrdom narratives, which Delehayé hailed as “the epic passions.”

Significant changes occur both in the textual form and in the elements of *fabula* of the new martyrdom narratives. *The Passion of Saint Eugenia* (BHL 2666–2670) exhibits such changes well.⁵³ As to the form, the narrative significantly lengthens, while it employs chiefly indirect speech. As to the elements of *fabula*, a considerable number of innovative events, taking bulky portions of space loom through the narrative. An author commences with the information about Eugenia's family, parents and siblings, Eugenia's childhood and education. At this time, promoting a distinguished family background became a necessary component of the lives of saints as well.⁵⁴ The martyr is presented to be of a noble origin (Eugenia is a daughter of a Roman patrician), having meaningful relationships with the other family members. Needless to say, this element displays the break with the earlier martyrdom narratives, which blotched the martyrs as social outlaws, cast out from their families.

Furthermore, the martyr Eugenia decides to take a long journey, which has evolved into another ineluctable element in the lives of saints, while being conspicuous previously in the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles and in the Greek romances.⁵⁵ A journey displays a path of self-exploration and inner pursuits, an opportunity to encounter others and to learn from them. Oft-times journey is a way to explore the benefits of one's solitude. Needless to say, in the early martyrdom narratives, the duration of the events does not allow space for such contemplative pursuits, as the time displayed in the narrative is significantly shorter.

Noteworthy space in the narratives is given to the martyr's attitude towards her body. Eugenia cuts her hair, puts on a male robe, and joins a religious community. The neglect, impartiality and detachment from the body encapsulate the general hagiographical trends of the time. One might think of the neutrality or even eagerness of martyrs towards their future death as a detachment from the body. However, at this time, neglect is a way to persevere in the daily martyrdom. A similar feature appears in the lives of saints. Additionally, the mention

53 The summary provided by E. Gordon Whatley, on the occasion of presenting his paper, “More than a Female Joseph,” at Cornell University in February 2010.

54 See *The Life of Antony* by Athanasius of Alexandria and *The Life of Macrina* by Gregory of Nyssa, for example.

55 See *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Longus' *Daphnis and Chloe*, Heliodorus' *Aethiopica*, and the *Ephesiaca* by Xenophon of Ephesus, to name some. See also Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, 59–76.

of monks and monastic is unimaginable in the early martyrdom narratives; yet in the times when monasticism flourishes, this is not astounding.

The motif of disguise also springs up in the narrative; Eugenia turns into a transvestite person, joining a monastic community as a man. Her family is grief-stricken and mourns her loss, thinking that she is dead. However, when her identity is consequently disclosed later in the narrative, her entire family rejoices and converts to Christianity. Her saintliness, piety, humility and learnedness are palpably accentuated in the narrative, which is yet another feature of the post-fourth century narratives.

The motive of love comes to sight in this narrative. A wealthy widow falls in love with Eugenia, thinking that she is a man. Love is associated with the erotic, which is yet another connection to Greek novels. Eugenia falls into a trap of intrigue, being accused of the attempted rape, and she is put on trial.

The ending segment recalls the events from the early martyrdom narratives. The scene is set in prison, the encounters with the other would-be martyrs are depicted, and the determination and perseverance of martyrs to pursue martyrdom are underlined. But, this is where the influence ends. Namely, Eugenia is martyred in the persecutions of the third century, after surviving several attempts to be persecuted by drowning and burning. This certainly novel element bestows an air of the miraculous on the narrative. All throughout the imprisonment period, Eugenia is persistent in openly spreading Christianity and converting people, which indicates yet another prescribed activity for the possible readers/listeners of the text.

The above-said examples from one of the later martyrdom narratives display the novel elements of *fabula*, imbued with the different genre types and exhibiting a large extent of inclusiveness. These new hybrid martyrdom narratives not only comprised the elements from the early martyrdom narratives and the lives of saints, but also from the Apocryphal Acts of the Apostles and Greek romances.⁵⁶ The historical in them is highly questionable; the sequence of the events is sometimes illogical, while the characters are often unattested. On the other hand, their large inclusiveness of the other genres demonstrates their literariness. I will now turn to another methodological approach in order to read more out of the martyrdom narratives and the transformation occurring in the fourth century.

56 Hilhorst, "The Apocryphal Acts," 5–8; Elliott, *Roads to Paradise*, 48–76.

Intertextuality of the Martyrdom Narratives

Within the theoretical framework of intertextuality, any work is best understood in a comparative way. This presupposes moving outwards from the work's apparent structure into the relations it possesses with other works and other linguistic structures.⁵⁷ Every text is a mosaic and a combination of quotations and references from other texts, genres and discourses. Intertextuality purports the actual presence of one text within another. It is a relationship of co-presence between the two texts or among several texts.⁵⁸ Intertextuality, at its most simplified level, presupposes literal, word-for-word, borrowings from one text to the other. In accord with this approach, I will work over one of the early martyrdom narratives, *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus*, for the purpose of gouging the presence of phrases, expressions and sentences appropriated from other works. The end result found in this narrative will be contrasted to the intertextual findings of *The Passion of Saint Eugenia*. This method will directly unravel the authoritative excerpts lurking from both the early and the later martyrdom narratives.

The phrases *Deo mente, timore divino, extendens manus, propter nomen tuum, ecclesia catholica* in *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus* emanate from the works of Cyprian. The phrases *sacrifica diis, fac quod vis*, as well as the ablative absolute *data sententia* also appear in *The Martyrdom of Felicitas and Perpetua*. The expression *vitam aeternam* is attested in Tertullian's works. The expression *per bonam confessionem* is found both in *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus* and in *The Martyrdom of Ignatius of Antioch* (BHL 4255–4263), whose various textual variants Philippart dates within the range from 101–1550 CE. These examples re-attest adopting the same phrases through the narratives. The expression *fustibus caedi* comes forth in *The Martyrdom of Anastasia* (BHL 0404), dated as early as 601 CE. The phrase *deos manu factos* is utilized in Augustine's works as well.

The above-exhibited paradigms exert the set phrases borrowed from the authoritative Christian authors and the other martyrdom narratives. *The Martyrdom of Irenaeus* has almost had no quotations from the classical authors. Apparently, the early Christian martyrdom narratives were a constant source of inspiration for each other. They were carefully drafted with intertextual appropriations exclusively from the outstanding literary paragons. Such appropria-

57 G. Allen, *Intertextuality* (London: Routledge, 2000), 12.

58 G. Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 2.

tion insinuates not only the existence of the influence that flowed from one narrative to the other, but also a possibility that Christians at this time already coined the system of the set phrases and expressions to use in their writings.

As to the later martyrdom narratives, the recent research of E. Gordon Whatley on *The Passion of Saint Eugenia* elucidates the inclusion of assorted genre types within this narrative. Whatley argues that the *Passio Eugeniae* borrows and adapts narrative topoi and *verbatim* phrasing from *The Acts of Paul and Thecla*, Rufinus' *History of the Monks in Egypt*, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Pelagius' *Ad Demetriadem*, Hyginus' *Fabulae*, and Proba's *Cento*, among other diverse sources.⁵⁹ Such a broad inclusion of phrases into this martyrdom narrative from the diversified narrative forms, such as the apocryphal literature, Christian monastic literature, Pelagian writings, Latin mythological treatises, and Christian poetry sets it far apart from its more meticulous predecessors, the early martyrdom narratives. In sum, the intertextual methodological approach actually only approves and corroborates what was attested earlier regarding the genre inclusiveness of the later martyrdom narratives.

Authoritative Texts Behind

One cannot escape recognizing the vast discrepancy of the narratological features and intertextual influxes between the early and the later martyrdom narratives. The rift of the fourth century set the irreversible differences between the two.

The former were constructed around the dialogue form of the court trial records. They cultivated a preference for the specific elements of the *fabula*, which repeatedly impregnated the narratives around the dialogues. Such an exclusive genre allowed very little influence outside the set genre rules and acquiesced in only a random inclusion of the other narrative forms. Similarly, in intertextual agency, this genre authorized only the appropriation of the phrases and the set expressions from the foremost Christian authors and the other martyrdom narratives. Therefore, the authoritative texts looming behind these narratives are few and far between; these authorities are carefully selected outstanding and renowned Christian writings.

59 See E.G. Whatley, "More Than a Female Joseph? The Sources of the Late-Fifth-Century *Passio Sanctae Eugeniae*," in *Saints and Scholars: New Perspectives on Anglo-Saxon Literature and Culture in Honour of Hugh Magennis*, ed. S. McWilliams (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2012), 87–111. I am grateful to Dr. Whatley for sending me a pre-publication draft of his article.

Accordingly, the question of whether these narratives ever aimed to be literature and what the intention of their authors was seems quite legitimate. Barnes posed the question whether these forms were ever meant to entertain the audience or their aim was rather to inform a reader about what really happened.⁶⁰ As in the times upcoming after the fourth century “nothing new and true could any longer be said about martyrs who were receding rapidly into the past,”⁶¹ this genre inevitably cleared the way for the growth of hagiographical legends and hagiographical fiction.

After the fourth century, the martyrdom narratives intertextually tend to include a variety of diversified sources, while the narrative form widens and expands the elements of the *fabula* towards the new paradigmatic contemporary Christian writings, but also the antecedent apocryphal and classical narratives. The authoritative texts behind the later martyrdom narratives are the different examples of both Christian and classical pagan literature. This demonstrates their tendency to become a literature proper; more features in these narratives indicate to literary than to historical.

In conclusion, I will turn to Bakhtin's discussion of the concepts of the inclusive and exclusive genres.⁶² Writing about the two genres, novel and epic, he says that

novel is defined by what could be called the rule of genre inclusiveness: the novel can include, ingest, devour other genres and still retain its status as a novel. Success and existence of a genre could be influenced by their ability to include or exclude; limitation and complementariness define them. Novel is successful as it is inclusive. Therefore, while novel continues to develop, allows itself the freedom to transform and is directed to the future, epic does not go beyond the fixed form. This mechanism provides novel with the ever-lasting up-to-datedness.⁶³

Similarly, the later martyrdom narratives exhibited the ability to include different narrative forms, but still keep their integrity and identity. This theory may explain why these narratives proliferate after the fourth century, as Philip-part's database from the beginning of this article has demonstrated. However, their ultimate success is beyond our assessment at this time; it was to

60 Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 154.

61 Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 154.

62 M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination. Four Essays* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

63 Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination*, xxxii.

depend, first and foremost, on the purpose and uses of the martyrdom literature, regardless of its being produced for edification, religious purposes or entertainment.

The Ascension Spectacle: Lukan Narrative in Its Reception

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‘Jetzt segnet er noch einmal seine Treuen,
Zum großen Bund der Liebe sie zu weihen;
Dann trägt ihn eine Wolke himmelwärts.’

THEODOR KÖRNER, *Christi Himmelfahrt*



The Ascension of Christ to heaven can be said to be one of the most notable and influential events within Christian doctrine. It represents both an ending, that of Christ's earthly presence, and a beginning, the beginning of the Apostles' ministry. In the present article, I will present some aspects of the Ascension reception in the early Church. By no means do I claim even to try to offer an exhaustive picture of the topic, but merely to trace some interesting details and draw a conclusion with regard to the use and interpretation of primarily the Lukan accounts of the Ascension of Jesus. I will argue that from an early period there existed two distinct traditions affirming the Ascension in significantly different ways. Furthermore, I shall demonstrate that this amazing and mysterious event was not simply a creation of the Church; it was much more than a dogmatic formula of the Councils. A brief examination of the iconographical, liturgical and textual reception will sketch, I hope, the importance and impact of the Ascension story within the early Christian Church. Subsequently, I will show aspects of the early reception of the Ascension, emphasising the existence of the two traditions, corresponding to the Johannine and Lukan narratives.

The Ascension and Its Reception in the Second Century

Luke, the 'beloved physician' and evangelist,¹ is the only New Testament writer to record a visible Ascension of Christ.² He presents the Ascension event twice (Luke 24:50–52 and Acts 1:9–11), as the culmination of his gospel and as the element of the beginning in the introduction of his second volume, Acts of the Apostles. The reception and interpretation of this puzzling story remained mostly untreated in modern Biblical and Patristic scholarship. Andrew Gregory, in his study on the reception of Luke-Acts in the pre-Irenaeus period, is confident in concluding that both the Gospel and its sequel were known and used by the time of Irenaeus.³ However, he found little evidence regarding their early usage. And it is not surprising to find no citations from the books that later formed the New Testament until the second half of the second century, since the oral tradition was still regarded highly.⁴ However, some scattered allusions can indicate knowledge of certain traditions that link the Ascension with the Resurrection, as part of the glorification of Jesus.

The use of Luke in the first half of the second century was minimal, François Bovon identifying a list of 17 writings from the second century that witness certain knowledge of passages from Luke's Gospel or use it as their source.⁵ In

- 1 On the authorship of Luke-Acts it is argued that the two-volume book might be an edited version of some material preserved from Luke by an anonymous Christian writer towards the end of the first century. 'It is *possible* that Luke, Paul's companion, is the source for the "we" passages in Acts and perhaps for more of the material in Acts 13–28. This Luke would be a second generation Christian. (Paul must be considered a first generation Christian.) Towards the end of the first century a third generation Christian—who had not accompanied Paul—using Luke as his authority for the latter half of Acts composed Luke-Acts.' Gregory E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition. Josephos, Luke-Acts and Apologetic Historiography*, NovT-Sup 64 (Leiden: Brill, 1992), p. 326. However, most biblical scholars recognise Luke, a Syrian of Antioch, as the author of Luke-Acts (cf. Robert J. Karris, 'The Gospel According to Luke', in Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, Roland E. Murphy (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Burns and Oates, 1995), p. 648). Therefore, when referring to the designation of the author of Luke-Acts, I will always use Luke.
- 2 I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke. A Commentary on the Greek Text*, New International Greek Testament Commentary (Carlisle: Paternoster/Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), p. 908.
- 3 Andrew Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus. Looking for Luke in the Second Century*, WUNT 2.169 (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), p. 353.
- 4 Barbara Aland, 'Die Rezeption des neutestamentlichen Textes in den ersten Jahrhunderten', in Jean-Marie Sevrin (ed.), *The New Testament in Early Christianity*, BETL 86 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), p. 1.
- 5 He mentions the *Gospel of the Ebionites*, the *Gospel of the Nazarenes*, the *Gospel of Peter*, the

response to Bovon's analysis, Gregory emphasises the fact that these authors might have drawn on traditions also used by Luke, and not necessarily dependent on the Lukan accounts.⁶ Like Bovon, he finds evidence for the reception of Acts in three apocryphal *Acts* from the second century.⁷ It is certain that 'only with Irenaeus is the evidence sufficient to demonstrate that the third Gospel is treated explicitly under the title *Luke*⁸ and as one of four definitive accounts of the life of Jesus that are to be held in tension with each other.'⁹

By the middle of the second century Luke-Acts were known, but their influence within the Christian communities was minimal. Irenaeus mentions that Marcion used the Gospel of Luke in an incomplete and edited form¹⁰ in his

so-called *Unknown Gospel* (fragments of Papyrus Egerton 2), the *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Traditions of Matthias* (cited by Clement of Alexandria in *Stromata* 2.45.4, 3.26.3, 7.82.1), *Papyrus Cairensis* 10735, the *Ascension of Isaiah*, the *Questions of Bartholomew*, the *Epistula Apostolorum*, the 'longer ending' of Mark, *Codex Bezae* (in which the author tries 'to bring Luke's Gospel closer to Matthew's'), the *Protoevangelium of James*, the *Infancy Gospel according to Thomas*, the *Apocalypse of Peter*, Tatian's *Diatessaron*, *Sibylline Oracles*. Most of these texts recount the 'birth story' in a similar way to Luke. François Bovon, 'The Reception and Use of the Gospel of Luke in the Second Century', in Craig G. Bartholomew; Joel B. Green; Anthony C. Thiselton (eds.), *Reading Luke. Interpretation, Reflection, Formation, Scripture and Hermeneutics* 6 (Milton Keynes: Paternoster/Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), pp. 382–389.

- 6 'If such material originates with Luke, then "parallels" in later texts may reflect the dependence on his account. If Luke reproduces earlier traditions, such "parallels" may reflect the independent use of shared traditions, not the dependence of a later author on Luke.' Andrew Gregory, 'Looking for Luke in the Second Century. A Dialogue with François Bovon', in Bartholomew; Green; Thiselton, *Reading Luke*, p. 405. Cf. Gregory, *The Reception*, p. 350.
- 7 The *Acts of Paul*, the *Acts of Peter* and the *Acts of John*. Cf. Gregory, *The Reception*, pp. 343–349.
- 8 In *Adv. haer.* III.1.1–11, Irenaeus mentions that 'Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel that was preached by him.' Similarly, the Book of Acts received its title only in the second century. Cf. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition*, p. 314.
- 9 Gregory, *The Reception*, p. 297.
- 10 *Adv. haer.* III.11.7. Arthur Bellinzoni notes that 'in undermining the authority of the Jewish Bible, Marcion needed to substitute another scriptural authority for use in the Christian churches, and so he created a new edition of the Gospel of Luke and the ten Pauline letters to purify them of what he regarded as later additions. Marcion's version of the Gospel of Luke followed the accepted procedures of the period by reworking and editing the ancient text.' Arthur J. Bellinzoni, 'The Gospel of Luke in the Second Century CE', in Richard P. Thompson; Thomas E. Phillips (eds.), *Literary Studies in Luke-Acts. Essays in Honor of Joseph B. Tyson* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), p. 62. Cf. Gregory, 'Looking for Luke in the Second Century', p. 409.

pseudo-gospel.¹¹ Bovon argues that Marcion might have received Luke's Gospel in Pontus, because 'Rome does not seem to know the third gospel until the middle of the century; *Clement* and *Hermas* show no knowledge of it at all.'¹² However, no mention of the Ascension is found in Marcion's *Gospel*.¹³

Justin Martyr, the most important second-century Christian apologist, seems to have used both oral tradition and written sources (such as Matthew and Luke) in his writings. He extensively refers to the Ascension and seems to be acquainted with the Lukan descriptions.¹⁴ However, it was only with Irenaeus, and the first attempts to form a New Testament canon (e.g. Marcion, *The Muratorian Canon*) that the two Lukan books gained universal recognition in the present form.¹⁵ In Eusebius's words, Irenaeus affirms that, as a boy, he heard Polycarp of Smyrna, thus receiving his authoritative account of the Gospel orally.¹⁶ Although this tradition is highly questionable, Polycarp is said to have received the tradition from the Apostle John, as his disciple, and this conferred legitimacy to his preaching: the tradition he received was apostolic and, therefore, orthodox.¹⁷ It is assumed that until the period of Irenaeus the oral tradition was dominant over the written documents.¹⁸ And, as Gregory

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- 11 Cf. E. Hennecke; W. Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. 1, R.McL. Wilson (transl.) (London: Lutterworth, 1963), pp. 348–349.
 - 12 Bovon, 'The Reception and Use of the Gospel of Luke in the Second Century', p. 396.
 - 13 Joseph B. Tyson *Marcion and Luke. A Defining Struggle* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2006), pp. 45–46.
 - 14 Cf. Bovon, 'The Reception and Use of the Gospel of Luke in the Second Century', p. 395.
 - 15 Cf. *Adv. haer.* III.20.2. The criteria for a document to receive a canonical status were as follows: '(1) it had to have been written by an apostle or by an immediate disciple of an apostle; (2) it had to be recognized as authentic by at least one leading ecclesiastical community in the ancient Church; and (3) it had to be consistent with apostolic doctrine—that is, with the rule of faith preserved in the living tradition of the Church.' George Cronk, *The Message of the Bible: An Orthodox Christian Perspective* (Crestwood: svS Press, 1982), p. 123.
 - 16 'And there is Polycarp, who not only was taught by the apostles and conversed with many who had seen the Lord, but also was established by apostles in Asia in the church at Smyrna. We ourselves saw him in our early youth, for he lived long and was in extreme old age when he left this life in a most glorious and most noble martyrdom. He always taught the doctrine he had learned from the apostles, which he delivered to the church, and it alone is true.' Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* III.4. Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.20, in Roy J. Deferrari (transl.), *The Fathers of the Church* 19 (Washington: CUA, 1953), p. 329.
 - 17 Luke himself drew on both written and oral tradition and, it is highly probable to have included traditions that were widely known, at least amongst his circle. Cf. Gregory, 'Looking for Luke in the Second Century', p. 403.
 - 18 Eusebius, in *Hist. eccl.* 3.39, records the words of Papias who asserts that he 'did not imagine

asserts, ‘texts such as Luke [or/and Acts] were recognized to be authoritative precisely because they were in agreement with the living and apostolic tradition, not vice versa.’¹⁹

In the collection of writings known as “the Apostolic Fathers”, no mention to a visible Ascension of Christ is found. In a number of passages the departure of Jesus is rather implied than clearly stated, giving us the impression that these authors were aware of the Ascension tradition, but were not interested in interpreting it. In 1Clem 36:5, the author makes use of Ps 110:1 to indicate the place of Jesus at the Father’s right side (cf. Acts 2:34–35). Here we can trace the early “glorification” kerygma that links the Resurrection with the Ascension and the session *ad dexteram Dei* (cf. John 20:17; Mark 16:19–20; PolPhil 2:1). Similarly, in IgnMagn 7:2 the author follows a Johannine schema highlighting the connection of the Son with the Father (cf. John 16:28; Eph 4:9–10; IgnSmyr 3:3; Novatian, *De Trinitate* 11.8), but without making any reference to a visible Ascension. Furthermore, Barn 15:9 mentions the celebration of the Ascension on a Sunday, again, echoing the primitive kerygma of the Resurrection seen as a cohesive exaltation story.

The Early Celebration of the Ascension Feast

Whether the observance of the feast was concomitantly celebrated on Easter Sunday or on a different one remains unclear in the text of Barn 15:9. Nevertheless, it can be securely argued that early Christianity saw Christ’s Resurrection and his departure in unity, as two aspects (or moments) of the exaltation or glorification of the Son of God (Luke 24:51; John 20:17; EpAp 51; EvPe 56, EvNicod 17.1 TBenj 9:3, etc.). The Ascension represented the conclusion to the Resurrection story. And this view conspicuously influenced the liturgical celebration of the Ascension feast.²⁰ Consequently, the commemoration of Jesus’ return to the Father was placed either on Easter Sunday or at the end of the fifty days period, on the day of Pentecost. Both these traditions reflect the unity of the

that things out of books would help me as much as the utterances of a living and abiding voice.’

19 Gregory, ‘Looking for Luke in the Second Century’, p. 410.

20 As Boris Bobriskoy rightly observes, in the pre-Nicene period ‘the whole Eastertide (fifty days) was probably devoted to the common and indivisible celebration of the glorious mysteries of Christ, without special emphasis on the Ascension, but in general meditation upon the exaltation of our Saviour in the Resurrection and Ascension.’ ‘Ascension and Liturgy’, in *St. Vladimir’s Seminary Quarterly* 3.4 (1959), p. 13.

Pentecostal period, as an interval during which the early Christian Church celebrated the joy of the Resurrection. On the one hand, the testimonies of *Barn* 15:9, the *Apology of Aristides* 2, the *Gospel of Peter* 9:35–39, the *Epistle of the Apostles* 51, and the *Testament of Benjamin* 9:3, witness a tradition that links the Ascension with Easter Day.

Yet, another tradition affirms the observance of the Ascension at the end of Pentecost. This independent tradition, probably much later than the former, is to be found in the Syriac *Doctrine* (or *Teaching*) of the Apostles,²¹ Eusebius,²² and *Itinerarium Egeriae* 43.²³ The celebration of the Ascension on Pentecost was probably introduced in the third century, and Eusebius is the first author to mention its celebration separately from the Resurrection (*De Solemnitate paschali* 5). And although the Canon 43 of the Council of Elvira (AD 300) states that ‘the bridegroom was taken away’ forty days after he was raised from the grave,²⁴ it was not until the late fourth century that the Ascension began to be celebrated as a separate Feast—on the fortieth day after the resurrection, the time of the event as described in Acts 1:3.²⁵ According to Jean Daniélou, the first mention of the Ascension observance on the day recorded by Luke seems

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- 21 The ninth Canon states that ‘Again the Apostles appointed: At the completion of fifty days after his resurrection, make the commemoration of his ascension to his glorious Father.’ *Doctrine of the Apostles*, in W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1864), p. 27. Here, the Ascension is thus celebrated on the day of Pentecost by apostolic commission. Cf. Witold Witakowski, ‘The Origin of the “Teaching of the Apostles”’, in H.J.W. Drijvers; R. Lavenant; C. Molenberg; G.J. Reinik (eds.), *IV Symposium Syriacum 1984. Literary Genres in Syriac Literature*, Orientalia Christiana Analecta 229 (Roma: Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1987), pp. 161–171.
 - 22 In his *Vita Const.* 4.64(1), Eusebius records that the Emperor’s death coincided with the celebration of Christ’s Ascension, on the afternoon of the Pentecost day: ‘Each of these events took place during the greatest festival, the utterly sacred and holy Pentecost, honoured with seven weeks and sealed up with a single day, during which divine words describe the ascension into Heaven of the universal Saviour and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon mankind.’ in Averil Cameron & Stuart G. Hall (transl.), *Clarendon Ancient History Series* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), p. 178.
 - 23 Cf. J.G. Davies, ‘The Peregrinatio Egeriae and the Ascension’, in *Vigiliae Christianae* 8.1/2 (1954), pp. 93–100.
 - 24 Thomas J. Talley, *The Origins of the Liturgical Year* (New York: Pueblo, 1986), pp. 62–63; J.G. Davies, *He Ascended into Heaven. A Study in the History of Doctrine*, Bampton Lectures 1958 (London: Lutterworth, 1958), pp. 192–198.
 - 25 As Jan van Goudoever concludes, ‘the commemoration of the Lord’s Ascension on the 40th day after Easter (in accordance with Luke’s Acts) came into existence at the end of the fourth century or beginning of the fifth century.’ *Biblical Calendars* (Leiden: Brill, 1961), p. 199; cf. Lohfink, *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu*, pp. 137–146.

to be in a Homily of Gregory of Nyssa (388).²⁶ From this point onwards, the feast of the bodily Ascension of Jesus into heaven is celebrated separately from the Resurrection or Pentecost.²⁷

The Lukan Ascension and Its Positive Reception

To say the least, it is difficult to trace the idea of the Ascension in the second century. Yet, the weak reception of the Lukan visible *Assumptio Christi* cannot be interpreted as an original author's conception.²⁸ We can clearly see two distinct Ascension traditions, of which the one witnessed by John 20 was more authoritative. In the subsequent period, the Lukan narratives start to become adopted as the standard Ascension account, and Christ's departure to be seen as a central event within the Salvation History.²⁹ It might be suggested that the Christological disputes of the following centuries uncovered the tradition of the bodily and visible Ascension of Jesus witnessed by Luke, which successively became the widely accepted account.³⁰

In the pre-Nicene Patristic literature, in almost every instance the Ascension is associated with the session at the right hand of the Father of Ps 110:1 (Acts 2:33).³¹ Through the Ascension, the Church saw the fulfilment of the vetero-

26 'Par ailleurs les seules indications certaines de l'existence de la fête de l'Ascension au quarantième jour après Pâques sont postérieures à 390. Le sermon de Grégoire, qui paraît en relation avec l'apparition de cette fête ne saurait être très antérieur. Nous pensons donc pouvoir le fixer avec une approximation aussi grande que possible au quarantième jour après Pâques de 388.' Jean Danielou, 'Gregoire de Nysse et l'Origine de la Fete de l'Ascension', in Patrick Granfield; Josef A. Jungmann (eds.), *Kyriakon. Festschrift Johannes Quasten 2* (Münster: Aschendorff, 1970), p. 666.

27 John Chrysostom, *In Act. Apost. hom.* 4; Ephraem the Syrian, *In Act.*; cf. Victorien C. Larrañaga, *L'Ascension de Notre-Seigneur dans la Nouveau Testament*, G. Cazaux (transl.), Scripta Pontificii Instituti Biblici 50 (Roma: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1938), pp. 612–628.

28 A.W. Zwiep, *The Ascension of the Messiah in Lukan Christology*, NovTSup 87 (Leiden: Brill, 1997), p. 192.

29 Cf. Gerhard Lohfink *Die Himmelfahrt Jesu. Untersuchungen zu den Himmelfahrts- und Erhöhungstexten bei Lukas*, Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 26 (München: Kösel-Verlag, 1971), p. 104.

30 Davies highlights this by concluding that 'there is sufficient evidence to make it plain that both Jewish and pagan enemies of Christianity were not unaware of its teaching concerning the Ascension, and for this reason Justin Martyr and, later, Tertullian and Origen, sought to defend it against attack.' *He Ascended into Heaven*, p. 71.

31 Cf. Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 36.5; Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* III 10.6; Tertullian, *De Resur.* 22.9–10, *Ad.*

testamental messianic prophecies.³² The whole of humanity was brought into heaven through Christ's resurrection and departure. And whereas the resurrection was an event imperceptible to the physical world, a mystery far too great, the Ascension was visible to the whole creation. Luke's emphasis on the visible aspect of the Ascension, which we find in Irenaeus,³³ is also insisted upon by the Fathers, in order to articulate faith not only in Jesus' bodily resurrection (cf. Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 1.50), but also in his divinity (cf. Novatian, *De Trinitate* 11).³⁴

The evidence of the Patristic literature illustrates, nevertheless, the importance of the Ascension, through its presence in all the early confessional statements.³⁵ Therefore, the Nicene Creed reads that Christ 'came down and was incarnate and made man, He suffered, and on the third day he rose again, and ascended into heaven [ἀνελθόντα εἰς τοὺς οὐρανούς]'. Peculiarly, here, as also in the Caesarean Creed, no mention to the enthronement at the right hand of God is made. It, however, appears in the Confessions of Jerusalem, Constantinople, Antioch, and all the later ones.³⁶

Prax. 30.4–5; Lactantius, *Epitome of the Divine Institutes* 42.3–5; Eusebius, *Ct. in Ps.* 17; Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech. Or.* 4.14. In a number of instances, Ps 24 is added to the story, citing the words of the Angels that accompany Christ through the heavens. Irenaeus (*On the Apostolic Preaching* 84) writes that 'He [Christ] was visible in his ascension; And, when the powers saw Him, the angels below cried out to those who were on the firmament: *Lift up your gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting gates, that the King of glory may come in.* [Ps 24:7, 9]' Cf. also Justin Martyr, *Dial.* 36.5; Eusebius, *Ct. in Ps.* 17. As Jean Danielou observes, 'Justin is the first to develop the dialogue between the angels of heaven who do not recognise the Word made Flesh and the angels of earth who reveal His identity: *The Angels and Their Mission According to the Fathers of the Church*, David Heimann (transl.) (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1957), p. 39.

32 Cf. Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 1.50; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 1.2; Lactantius, *Divine Institutes* 4.21; Augustine, *Exposition of the Psalms* 109.7.

33 *On the Apostolic Preaching* 84.

34 Rudolf Pesch, *Die Apostelgeschichte* (Apg 1–12), EKK V/1 (Düsseldorf: Benzinger / Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener, 2005), p. 75.

35 Cf. Justin Martyr, *Apol.* 1.21, 31, 42, 46, *Dial.* 63.1, 85.2, 126.1, 132.1; Melito of Sardis, *Peri Pascha* 104; Irenaeus, *Adv. haer.* 1 10.1, 111 6.2; Tertullian, *De praescr.* 13; Athanasius, *Expos. Fid.* 1; Rufinus, *In Symb. Ap.* 31.

36 The Ascension and enthronement of Jesus in heaven are both essential in understanding the role of the Church in the world and reassuring the Christian believer of the Resurrection reality. As J.N.D. Kelly notes, 'the first- and second-century Christian who expressed his faith in them understood them as implying that Christ had beaten down the hostile powers opposed to Him, and consequently to His Church.' *Early Christian Creeds* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1972), p. 151.

The Non-Canonical Development

The influence of the Lukan account on the Ascension theology is shown by the reception of the Ascension story in the writings of the Patristic authors, but also by the various rewritings of the apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature. There are a number of extra-canonical sources, which offer a narration of Christ's departure into heaven.³⁷ To take just one example, let us briefly examine the description of the Ascension in the *Ascension of Isaiah*.³⁸

In the second part of the book, the *Vision*, a heavenly journey of Isaiah is described. An angel assists him through the heavens, until finally he sees the Lord ascending through the seven heavens.³⁹ This ascension is described in detail, combining the physical departure of Christ with the notion of glorifica-

37 Cf. Mikeal C. Parsons, *The Departure of Jesus in Luke-Acts: The Ascension Narratives in Context*, JSNTSup 21 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), p. 145.

38 This pseudepigraphal writing is a Jewish-Christian apocalypse probably written in Syria, between A.D. 112 and 138. The document is a composite work, combining the old Jewish legend of the *Martyrdom of Isaiah* (chapters 1–5) and the *Vision of Isaiah* (chapters 6–11), which is a Christian interpolation. If in the case of the former we can argue that it was probably composed in Hebrew and translated into Greek, in the case of the *Visions*, it was certainly written in Greek from the beginning. Although the writing is extant in a number of different languages (Greek, Ethiopic, Latin, Slavonic, Coptic), the complete text survived only in three Ethiopic manuscripts. Cf. Jonathan Knight, *The Ascension of Isaiah* (Sheffield: SAP, 1995), p. 9.

39 An interesting parallel can be drawn here between the elevation through the seven heavens developed in the Merkavah and Hekhalot literature (3 Enoch 17; cf. 2 Enoch 20), and the observance of the Ascension feast on the 50th day after the Resurrection. Eusebius, in *De Solemn. Pasch.* 5, explains that the exultation period after Christ's Resurrection is of 'seven complete sets of seven days', and it is followed by the celebration of the Ascension feast, on the fiftieth day. 'Therefore, after the Pascha we celebrate Pentecost, with seven complete sets of seven days, after manfully completing the previous forty-day period of instruction before the Pascha with six sets of seven. For the number six relates to action and accomplishment, and for this reason God is said to have made the universe in six days. The labors in that [number six] will be quite rightly succeeded by the second festival in seven sevens, when there is a multiplication of our rest, which the number seven signifies symbolically. The number of Pentecost, however, is not complete with these [seven sevens]; overshooting the seven sevens, it puts a seal on the all-festive day of Christ's ascension by means of a monad, the last day after these [seven sevens].' Thus, the forty-day (six weeks) stage of preparation and fasting before Easter is complemented by a seven-week time of joy, and it is the Ascension feast that concludes the whole period. Later on, the fiftieth day after the Resurrection will be devoted to the commemoration of the outpouring of the Spirit, expressing the fullness of God's gift.

tion (11:22–33).⁴⁰ It is most certainly a Christian composition concentrated on Jesus' death, his Resurrection, and especially on the Ascension.⁴¹ The Beloved One ascends into the heavens and receives angelic worship and praise in all the heavens. Finally, in the seventh, he takes his seat at the right hand of the throne of God. The idea of enthronement seems to be derived from 1 Pet 3:22 (Ps 110:1), and the final verse (11:33) completes, with its mention of the 'angel of the Holy Spirit', the Trinitarian image of God's throne.⁴² Interestingly, in the Ethiopic version of *AscenIs* 9:16, Jesus' Ascension occurs 545 days after the resurrection, a tradition most probably drawn from Gnostic sources.⁴³ Although its form is that of an apocalypse, the focus of the book is on the history of Jesus

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- 40 VisIs 11:22–33, in Michael A. Knibb (transl.), in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2, ABRL (New York: Doubleday, 1985), pp. 175–176: 'And the angel who led me said to me, "Understand, Isaiah." And I saw when he sent out the twelve disciples and ascended. And I saw him, and he was in the firmament, but was not transformed into their form. And all the angels of the firmament, and Satan, saw him and worshipped. And there was much sorrow there as they said, "How did our Lord descend upon us, and we did not notice the glory which was upon him, which we (now) see was upon him from the sixth heaven?" And he ascended into the second heaven, and he was not transformed, but all the angels who (were) on the right and on the left, and the throne in the middle, worshipped him, and praised him, and said, "How did our Lord remain hidden from us as he descended, and we did not notice?" And in the same way he ascended into the third (heaven), and in the same way they praised him and spoke. And in the fourth heaven and also the fifth they spoke exactly the same way. But there was one glory, and from it he was not transformed. And I saw when he ascended into the sixth heaven, that they worshipped him and praised him; but in all the heavens the praise grew louder. And I saw how he ascended into the seventh heaven, and all the righteous and all the angels praised him. And then I saw that he sat down at the right hand of that Great Glory, whose glory I told you I could not behold. And also I saw that the angel of the Holy Spirit sat on the left.'
- 41 'Une deuxième partie décrit comment le prophète, par une voyage dans les sept cieux, est témoin de la venue du Christ au monde (6–11). La provenance chrétienne de 3,13–4,22 et de 6–11 est généralement reconnue.' Joseph Verheyden, 'L'Ascension d'Isaïe et l'Évangile de Matthieu. Examen de AI 3: 13–18', in Jean-Marie Sevrin (ed.), *The New Testament in Early Christianity*, BETL 86 (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1989), p. 247.
- 42 Enrico Norelli interprets this episode as a divine (heavenly) liturgy, saying: 'Ora, il contest è quello della liturgia celeste. Della vergine dello spirito si dice che, pur sedendo sul trono, loda incessantemente Sabaoth, e quindi si può dedurre che Christo ed essa siano al culmine della lode celeste.' Paolo Bettio; Aldo Kossova; Claudio Leonardi; Enrico Norelli; Lorenzo Perrone, *Ascensio Isaiae. Textus*, Corpus Christianorum—Series Apocryphorum 7 (Brepolis: Turnhout, 1995), p. 588.
- 43 According to Irenaeus, the Valentinians (*Adv. haer.* 1.3.2) and the Ophites (*Adv. haer.* 1.30.14) upheld that Jesus ascended eighteen months after the Resurrection. Cf. Zwiep, *The Ascension of the Messiah in Lukan Christology*, p. 99. Similarly, the *Letter of James* 2:19–24

(the past) and not on eschatology. Certain parallels between the *Ascension of Isaiah* and Luke-Acts can be identified,⁴⁴ and might reflect a possible literary dependence on the Lukan narratives of the Ascension. However, this idea cannot be sustained with certainty.⁴⁵

Amongst other Ascension accounts that echo the Lukan narratives, there is also the *Acts of Pilate* 14:1, where the day of the Ascension coincides with that of the Resurrection. The author clearly used the Lukan writings, since Jesus is described as ascending on a cloud from a mountain (ActPhil 16:6). Another account of the visible Ascension of Christ is found in the *Epistle of the Apostles* 51,⁴⁶ and shows a probable dependence on the Ascension accounts in Luke-Acts.⁴⁷ It can be easily observed that, unlike the pre-Nicene patristic writers, the authors of apocryphal literature do not simply record the Ascension tradition as preserved in the New Testament, but resort to the apocalyptic Jewish traditions and imaginative reconstructions.⁴⁸

The Iconography of the Ascensio Christi

In iconography, the Ascension is missing from all the early catacombs, and it appears that the earliest extant graphic representations of this episode belong to the late fourth and early fifth centuries.⁴⁹ It seems that the Lukan description of the Ascension (especially the Acts account) was widely received and

mentions 550 days, whilst in *Pistis Sophia* 1 Christ ascended in the twelfth year after the Resurrection (Hennecke; Schneemelcher, *New Testament Apocrypha*, pp. 252–253).

44 Cf. the use of an 'Elect One' (AscenIs 8:7—Lk 9:35; 23:35), Isaiah's praise of God for his promise (AscenIs 8:22—Lk 24:49; Acts 2:33), and of the Ascension (AscenIs 11:22–33—Lk 24:50–52; Acts 1:9–11).

45 Gregory (*The Reception*, p. 77) maintains that 'there is insufficient evidence from which to conclude that the *Ascension of Isaiah* is a witness to the knowledge and use of *Luke*.' On the other hand, Bovon ('The Reception and Use of the Gospel of Luke in the Second Century', p. 385) thinks that the author of the *Ascension of Isaiah* may have used Luke as his source. It seems that if the author of Ascls did not rewrite the Lukan Ascension account, they may have at least used a tradition similar to Luke's.

46 Also referred to as *Epistula Apostolorum*, the text is generally dated to the second century. EpAp 51 reads that 'as he [i.e. Christ] spoke, there was thunder and lightning and an earthquake, and the heavens divided and a bright cloud came and took him away.'

47 Cf. Bovon, 'The Reception and Use of the Gospel of Luke in the Second Century', p. 386.

48 Davies, *He Ascended into Heaven*, p. 78.

49 A.A. Schmid, 'Himmelfahrt Christi', in Engelbert Kirschbaum (ed.), *Lexikon der christliche Ikonographie*, vol. 2 (Freiburg: Herder, 1970), p. 268.

subsequently used in artistic and iconographical representations of the event. And according to Leonid Ouspensky, by the fifth or sixth century, the representations 'already acquired a definite form' (cf. Monza Ampullae and the Rabula Gospels of the 5th–6th cen.). 'Ever since then,' Ouspensky continues, 'the iconography of this festival has remained unchanged except for secondary details.'⁵⁰ There is sufficient evidence to think that at least two distinct types of Ascension depictions co-existed in the first six centuries. To the so-called Eastern type belong the representations that show Christ in the middle of an Aureole of light and carried up by two angels, whilst a group of Apostles and Mary witness the event by looking upwards.⁵¹ The elements of the Ascension representations correspond to the Lukan descriptions: it takes place on a mountain, a cloud is visible, two angels appear to interpret the mystery of Christ's departure,⁵² and Mary and the 12 (sic!) Apostles are witnessing Jesus' elevation.⁵³ The graphic illustration of Christ as being carried up by angels into heavens evokes the prophetic aspect of the Ascension narrative, a foretelling of his return in glory (Acts 1:11). As Ouspensky pertinently notes, 'this is why on icons of the Last Judgement He is depicted as on the icons of the Ascension, this time however not as the Redeemer but as the Judge of the Universe. In this prophetic aspect of the icon the group of the apostles with the Mother of God in the centre represents the image of the Church waiting for the Second Coming. Being, as we have said, a prophetic icon, an icon of the Second Coming, it unfolds

50 Leonid Ouspensky; Vladimir Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, G.E.H. Palmer and K. Kadloubovsky (transl.) (Crestwood: St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1989), p. 199.

51 To this tradition belong the headpiece of the *Barberini ivory* diptych (early 6th cen.), as well as the Ampullae of Monza and Bobbio (dated to the second half of the 6th cen.). Although Schmid regards this iconographical tradition as the oldest known representation of Christ's departure ('Himmelfahrt Christi', pp. 268–269), I am inclined to believe, on the grounds of both textual and archaeological evidence, that the second type belonging to the Glorification tradition is earlier, or that at least the two coexisted.

52 The cloud and the two men are elements also present in the scene of the Transfiguration (Lk 9:28–36; Mk 9:2–8; Matt 17:1–6), where the two men are identified with Moses and Elijah. The Transfiguration is associated with the Passion-Death-Resurrection-Ascension sequence, as the necessity of this metamorphosis in order to ascend later is implied in the narrative. Cyril of Alexandria, in his 51st homily on Luke's Gospel, interprets the Christ's exodus as referring to the passion and salvation through the cross. It is clear, however, that Lukan descriptions of the Ascension build up a Jesus-Elijah typology.

53 Although only 11 apostles witnessed the departure of Jesus (Acts 1:9–11), the icon of the Ascension illustrates a group of 12 apostles. The twelfth apostle was interpreted to be Paul. Also, the presence of Mary is not stated in the Lukan descriptions, but is nevertheless implied.

before us a grandiose picture starting with the Old Testament and ending with the culmination of the history of the world.⁵⁴

Another tradition, corresponding to the Johannine pattern, represents Christ ascending whilst holding the outstretched right hand of the Father. Here, we recognise the image of the Ascension as part of the Resurrection exaltation, and it alludes to the enthronement of Jesus at the Father's right side.⁵⁵ It is worth mentioning that, in both traditions, the Ascension is observed from the viewpoint of the group of human eyewitnesses. Subsequently, due to the strong Byzantine influence, the first type that follows the Lukan descriptions has gained much more authority and has become the standard representation of the Ascension in the Church. Therefore, it is not surprising that in the later centuries, a tradition that regards Luke as the first Christian iconographer was developed.⁵⁶ It appears that Luke's 'literary portrait of the Virgin Mary and his iconographic portrait of the *Theotokos* were seen as not far apart.'⁵⁷ And this tradition shows the great influence of this author's work on Christian art, becoming the patron saint of painters.

Conclusions

For the early Christian interpreters, Jesus Christ, the long awaited Messiah, did ascend into heaven, and the meaning of his Ascension is of great profundity. It

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- 54 Ouspensky; Lossky, *The Meaning of Icons*, p. 197. Similarly, in the *Assumptio Mariae* icon Christ appears in an Aureole being carried by two angels. It may be suggested that any iconographical depiction of Christ in an event following the Ascension will necessarily show him in that glorified state.
 - 55 Due to it being widespread in the West, this type is called 'Western'. To this belongs the Ivory pins tablet dated around 400 (Volbach Elfb Tf. 110). Cf. Schmid, 'Himmelfahrt Christi', pp. 272–273.
 - 56 See for example the so-called the "Triumph of Orthodoxy" icon, which represents the defeat of Iconoclasm and the restoration of the icons after the 7th Ecumenical Synod of Constantinople (when, in 842, Empress Theodora II reinstated the veneration of icons in the East). In the centre of the icon, which illustrates the Empress Theodora and the Fathers that took part in the Synod, the icon of the *Theotokos* is placed, allegedly the first image painted by Luke. Andrew of Crete and Theodore the Studite seem to be two of the first to insist on Luke's image as iconographer, an idea that rapidly gained momentum in the Eastern as well as Western traditions. Cf. Ernst von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (Leipzig: J.C. Hinrichs, 1899), p. 277.
 - 57 Jaroslav Pelikan, *Acts*, Brazos Theological Commentary on the Bible (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2005), p. 32.

cannot be regarded as a mere *finale* of his life and mission on earth; it is more than a spectacular wonder and a well-written story by Luke. The Ascension was necessary for reassuring the audience (i.e. the Church) that the resurrected one did not die, that the living Jesus sits in flesh at the right hand of the Father.⁵⁸ Through the Ascension, the world is not abandoned, as Christ continues his work through the Holy Spirit.⁵⁹ So that the Holy Spirit could be sent to earth, it was necessary for Christ to Ascend to the Father. And, as Oscar Cullmann affirms, Jesus did not 'abandon the earth. On the contrary, [...] his action on earth will then be much more effective than it was during the time of his incarnation.'⁶⁰ From the beginning, the Ascension and the enthronement of Christ at the right hand of the Father were seen as an indivisible unity. The Ascension story was not only used as an argument of Christ's divinity or bodily Resurrection against various Trinitarian and Christological "heresies", it also provided the believers with an image of Christ's victory.

Through our brief examination of this episode's reception in the first centuries, we discovered two distinct traditions of the Ascension. The first unites the Resurrection with the Ascension and sees them as a continuous movement of the glorified Son of God from the grave to the heavens. The second, a more developed tradition testified by Luke-Acts, depicts a visible Ascension, clearly distinguished from the Resurrection as a separate event. Significant variations existed amongst the Christian world in the interpretation of Christ's departure. However, the Church affirmed its reality in her Creeds and Confessions of faith. Apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature developed the Ascension story, responding to a need for more information about it. The iconography and Christian art illustrated it for the cultic interpretative use, and the celebration of the feast confirms its importance within the Christian Church and theology of the first centuries.

58 Cf. Jean Calvin, *Sermons on the Acts of the Apostles* 1:9.

59 See the sixth-century hymnological interpretation of Romanos the Melodist, in his *On the Ascension*.

60 Oscar Cullmann, *The Christology of the New Testament* (London: SCM, 1963) pp. 232–233.

Augustine's *Enarrationes* and the Final Form of the Psalter

Kevin Haley

There is a special difficulty in handling the Pss, because the book was obviously submitted to *an unceasing process of development and adaptation*: individual Pss become collective, private prayers become liturgical, songs of local sanctuaries are adapted to the temple of Jerusalem, royal Pss become messianic, historical Pss become eschatological. Modern interpreters speak of the 'rereadings' of the Pss; an earlier Ps which has in some way become antiquated (e.g. by the fall of the monarchy, the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple, the loss of political independence) is reworked to fit a contemporary situation and given a direction to the future which was not present in the original composition.¹



In his article, "Patristic Interpretations of the Composition of the Psalter," Matthias Henze raises an important question: "In the eyes of the Fathers, is the biblical Psalter a contingent collection of individual psalms whose order is for the most part arbitrary and remains obscure, or is there a structural and hence theological coherence to the arrangement of the psalms which gives meaning both to the Psalter as a whole and to the individual psalms by virtue of the place they have within that composition?"² To answer this, he looks at how Augustine, Diodore, and Gregory of Nyssa address this topic in their respective commentaries on the Psalms. He then offers a broad overview of how the issue of the composition of the Psalter has fared in modern biblical scholarship, especially given the notable shift in recent years. Toward the end of the article he makes an interesting observation, which was the impetus for this paper: "In the case of the renewed interest in the composition of the Psalter

1 John L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965), 703.

2 Matthias Henze, "Patristic Interpretations of the Composition of the Psalter," in *Of Scribes and Sages: Early Jewish Transmission and Interpretation of Scripture* (Vol. II; New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 135–147, at 136.

all the attention is focused on the 'final form' of the text, while little if any interest is given to the reception history of the psalms."³ If, as Brian E. Daley notes, "Patristic exegesis has become almost fashionable again,"⁴ why have so few biblical scholars attempted to make a connection between the canonical shaping of the text and its reception history? Given that the very editing and shaping of biblical books is part of the text's reception history,⁵ these are in fact inextricably linked, and each discipline can inform the other.

Critical scholars throughout the 20th century acknowledged that many of the psalms of the individual were later reinterpreted to encompass the whole community of Israel.⁶ In Rabbinic Judaism this led to a reading such as: "R. Yudan taught in the name of R. Judah: All that David said in his Book of Psalms applies to himself, to all Israel, and to all the ages."⁷ Christian readers will notice a similarity between this and Augustine's hermeneutic of the "Totus Christus" as the subject of the psalms.⁸ In this paper, my goal is to answer Henze's implicit challenge and show how Augustine's *Enarrationes* in particular are connected to the canonical shaping and thus the final form of the book of Psalms. While

3 Henze, "Patristic Interpretations," 146.

4 "Is Patristic Exegesis Still Usable? Some Reflections on Early Christian Interpretation of the Psalms," in *The Art of Reading Scripture* (ed. Ellen F. Davis and Richard B. Hayes; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 69–88, at 69.

5 See, for example, Brevard Childs, "Psalm Titles and Midrashic Exegesis," *JSS* 16 (1971): 137–150; G.H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter* (Chico: Scholars Press, 1985); J. Clinton McCann, ed., *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter* (Sheffield, JSOT Press, 1993); Nancy L. deClaissé-Walford, *Reading from the Beginning: The Shaping of the Hebrew Psalter* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1997).

6 See especially Marko Marttila, *Collective Reinterpretation in the Psalms: A Study of the Redaction History of the Psalter* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006); Joachim Becker, *Israel deutet seine Psalmen: Urform und Neuinterpretation in den Psalmen* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1967) and *Wege der Psalmenexegese* (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1975).

7 Midrash Tehillim 18.1 (cf. 4.1 and 24.3) as translated in William G. Braude, trans., *The Midrash on Psalms* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959), 230.

8 A sample of the secondary literature on this topic includes Tarsicius Jan van Bavel, "The 'Christus Totus' Idea: A Forgotten Aspect of Augustine's Spirituality," in *Studies in Patristic Christology. Proceedings of the Third Maynooth Patristic Conference 1996* (ed. T. Finan and V. Twomey; Dublin: Four Courts Press, 1998), 84–94; Michael Cameron, "Totus Christus as Hermeneutical Construct," in "Augustine's Construction of Figurative Exegesis against the Donatists in the *Enarrationes in Psalmos*" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Chicago, 1996), 272–301 and "Enarrationes in Psalmos," in *Augustine through the Ages: An Encyclopedia* (ed. Allan D. Fitzgerald, John Cavadini, et al.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 290–296; Amy G. Oden, "Dominant Images for the Church in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: A Study in Augustine's Ecclesiology" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Methodist University, 1990).

he does so with regard to the order of the Psalms, I will be looking at the shift between the individual and the community and how this affected the reception history of the Psalms, particularly in Augustine.

Who is the implied author of the Psalms? While Jews and Christians have traditionally attributed authorship to David, critical scholars have long recognized that most, if not all, of the psalms are originally anonymous works composed for liturgical or scribal purposes.⁹ Only later did scribes add superscriptions or titles associating some of the compositions with David. That translations such as the LXX, Peshitta, and Targums contain even more Davidic superscriptions than the MT testifies that the practice of rereading the psalms in a way related to David continued until very late into the Second Temple Period.¹⁰ This ambiguity regarding the subject of the psalms naturally leads to fluidity in determining who the subject of any given psalm is. Some psalms of the individual were later reread, reinterpreted, and edited with the broader focus of the community. Consistent with Karel van der Toorn's observation that such editorial insertions usually occur at the seams of a given text,¹¹ these corporate references often occur at the end of a psalm (e.g. Pss 3, 14, 25, 28, 51, 130, 131), through a superscription (e.g. Ps 30), by putting the words of an individual in the mouth of a community (e.g. Ps 129), and near the seams of smaller subcollections within the five major "books" of the Psalter (Pss 3, 14, 25–34, 51, 69, 102). The ability of the Psalms in their final form to admit a variety of legitimate readings vis-à-vis their subjects (e.g. David, any king in David's line, an anonymous "liturgical Everyman," all Israel) testify to this process of rereading and as well as to the poles of stability and adaptability, which James Sanders sees as integral to the canonical process.¹² This ambiguity is also what enables the New Testament authors to place the words of the Psalms in the mouth

9 See James Kugel, "Topics in the History of the Spirituality of the Psalms," in *Jewish Spirituality: Volume I* (ed. Arthur Green; New York: Crossroad, 1986), 113–144; Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007).

10 For a helpful synopsis of the MT, LXX, and versions of the superscriptions found at Qumran, see Peter W. Flint, *The Dead Sea Psalms Scrolls and the Book of Psalms* (Leiden: Brill, 1997), 117–134.

11 van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 128 and 151.

12 James A. Sanders, "Adaptable for Life: The Nature and Function of Canon," in *Magnalia Dei* (ed. Frank Moore Cross, Werner E. Lemke, and Patrick D. Miller; Garden City: Doubleday, 1976), 531–560. See also, Marttila, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 18–21 and Nahum Sarna, *Songs of the Heart: An Introduction to the Book of Psalms* (New York: Schocken Books, 1993),

of Christ and to refer to him prophetically.¹³ And it is from these seeds that Augustine's readings of the Psalms developed and flourished. Another way to consider the ambiguity of the speaker is through the *Gattung*, or genre, of the royal Psalms.

Scholars have long noted that many psalms are somehow related to the King, hence the designation "royal psalms."¹⁴ Usually this is clear in the body of the text as in the well-known and messianic Psalm 2. "I will tell of the decree of the LORD: He said to me, 'You are my son, today I have begotten you'" (Ps 2:7), or in the opening words to Ps 110: "The LORD says to my lord: 'Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool.'" Other scholars, however, designate some psalms as royal because of the association with David in the superscriptions. Since David was king, when he prayed them, he prayed not only on behalf of himself but also on behalf of the people of whom he was the representative. Most individual lament psalms, especially ones with communal elements, should be understood, according to these scholars, as royal. Therefore his personal prayer cannot help but be extended to the broader community, whether or not a scribe made this explicit with a later insertion or liturgical antiphon. While none of the royal psalms according to Gunkel's strict classification exhibit collective reinterpretation, many have argued that the psalms exhibiting this are in fact royal because of it. In other words, those psalms that suddenly shift from the perspective of an individual to that of all Israel do so because the speaker is presumably the king.¹⁵ I agree wholeheartedly with those scholars who urge caution in throwing around this designation too liberally.¹⁶ A clear example of a non-royal psalm set in a royal context, where the fate of the king is linked to his people, occurs in one of the psalms outside the Psalter, the prayer of King Hezekiah in Isaiah 38.¹⁷

13 For a selection of important essays on the place of the Psalms in each part of the New Testament, see Steve Moyise and Maarten J.J. Menken, eds., *The Psalms in the New Testament* (London: T & T Clark, 2004).

14 Gunkel regarded Pss 2; 18; 20; 21; 45; 72; 101; 110; 132; and 144 as royal, though other scholars, especially John Eaton consider many more to be so. See Herman Gunkel and Joachim Begrich, *Introduction to Psalms: The Genres of the Religious Lyric of Israel* (trans. James D. Nogalski; Macon: Mercer University Press, 1998), 99–120; John H. Eaton, *Kingship and the Psalms* (2nd ed.; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1986).

15 See Roland E. Murphy, *The Psalms are Yours* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 76; Charles A. and Emilie G. Briggs, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1906), 25.

16 Marttila, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 8, n. 28.

17 Joachim Begrich, *Der Psalm des Hiskia* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1926); Mi-

Set in the context of Isa 36–39, itself sandwiched between Isa 35 and the second major section of the whole book, these chapters have long intrigued commentators. Why are chapters 38–39 placed after chapters 36–37, even though the events of the former seem to precede those of the latter? How should we assess these chapters vis-à-vis the parallel ones in 2 Kgs 18–20? It would take several books to begin to treat these questions, but, in any case, the author of this section makes a clear connection between the near death experience of King Hezekiah and that of Jerusalem itself. As the people's representative, the king's fate was inseparable from that of his people. And his prayer for healing mirrors his pious prayer for the salvation of the city. As Peter Ackroyd says, Hezekiah's prayer

Provides a pointer to that longed-for restoration of the temple and its worship ... The illness of Hezekiah and the death sentence upon him thus become a type of judgment and exile, and in that measure they run parallel to the theme of judgment which is found in the ambassador story which follows; but the theme of restored life and continuing rule which follows upon Hezekiah's strong appeal to the deity, is a pointer to the possibility of such a restoration for the community.¹⁸

After he receives the oracle from Isaiah, but before he was healed,¹⁹ there occurs a written psalm (מכתב) preceded by a heading or title exactly like what we find in the historical superscriptions about David (ב + infinitive construct). Now there is nothing in the psalm itself to indicate either that it is a royal psalm or that it has anything at all to do with the narrative context in which it is set. Most likely, the author of this section inserted a preexisting psalm into this narrative so that the narrative and the psalm could then be read in light of each other.²⁰ Again, the only thing royal about this psalm is that it is placed

chael L. Barré, "Restoring the 'Lost' Prayer in the Psalm of Hezekiah (Isaiah 38:16–17b)," *JBL* 114 (1995): 385–399; P.R. Ackroyd, "An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile: A Study of 2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38–39," *SJT* 27 (1974): 329–352;.

18 P.R. Ackroyd, "An Interpretation of the Babylonian Exile: A Study of 2 Kings 20, Isaiah 38–39," *SJT* 27 (1974), pp. 345–346.

19 The chronology of this section is notoriously difficult.

20 For outstanding treatments of this phenomenon in general and regarding Hezekiah's prayer in particular, see James W. Watts, *Psalm and Story: Inset Hymns in Hebrew Narrative* (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1992) and Steven Weitzman, *Song and Story in Biblical Narrative: The History of a Literary Convention in Ancient Israel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997).

in the mouth of the king in a particular historical circumstance. Take away the superscription and surrounding narrative context, and what is left is a generic prayer of thanksgiving that anyone can pray.²¹ This juxtaposition of psalm and narrative found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible and in the psalms through the historical psalm titles, according to Brevard Childs, testifies to the beginnings of midrashic exegesis in the text itself.²²

Before turning to Augustine's *Enarrationes* themselves, let us look at a few examples of this movement between the individual and community that I am calling collective reinterpretation. Ps 3, which the superscription associates with David's fleeing from Absalom, fits nicely into the genre of individual lament or prayer for deliverance. Yet the final verse, which may be a later insertion, extends the prayer in this way: "Deliverance belongs to the LORD; thy blessing upon thy people! Selah" (Ps 3:9).²³ Or consider the final two verses of Ps 51, the most used of the penitential psalms. Most of the psalm is strictly in the first person singular, until the jarring final two verses: "Do good to Zion in thy good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, then wilt thou delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on thy altar" (Ps 51:20–21).²⁴ What is going on here? Is this simply a reversal of the cult critical statement in the two verses preceding these? Or perhaps this is an extension of the prayer of David (or any anonymous individual) that effectively says, "O God, what you have accomplished in rebuilding me, now do to Zion." As Patrick Miller says regarding the communal ending of Ps 130, at least part of which seems to be secondary:

A final note is sounded in this psalm and it is heard over and over again in the Psalter. My experience with God is not exhausted by nor does it end with my personal deliverance and forgiveness. That forgiveness happens

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- 21 Given its current location as the second psalm in Morning Prayer for the Tuesday of Week 11 in the Church's Office, Christians around the world pray Hezekiah's prayer regularly.
 - 22 Childs, "Psalm Titles"; Elieser Slomovic, "Toward an Understanding of the Formation of Historical Titles in the Book of Psalms," *ZAW* 91 (1979): 350–380; Michael Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985). 403–407.
 - 23 See Howard Wallace, "King and Community: Joining with David in Prayer," in *Psalms and Prayers* (ed. Bob Becking and Eric Peels; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 267–277, at 272–274; Marttila, *Collective Reinterpretation*, 144–145.
 - 24 Most commentators regard these verses as secondary. For notable exceptions, see Briggs, *Psalms*, Vol. 11, 3–10; Mitchell Dahood, *Psalms*, Vol. 11 (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966–1970), 9–10; John Eaton, *Psalms* (London: SCM Press, 1967), 139–142.

not only to bring about the worship of God (v. 4b), but the experience of the self is a witness to larger communities that points them to God's way of forgiveness and deliverance and calls forth from them a similar worship and praise (cf. 22:22–31; 69:30–36). What God does for the individual is reflected in the Lord's dealings with the community. Both the individual and the community are recipients of the grace of God, and the experience of one is always a reminder and call to the other to trust in the one who lifts us out of the depths.²⁵

So perhaps in some cases, the shift to a communal focus is related to the vow of praise that normally accompanies the psalms of lament (e.g. Pss 22:22; 51:16–17; 69:30; Jonah 2:9). As soon as I am saved, the psalmist says, I will sing your praises amid the congregation and tell of what you have done so that others might also praise you.

To go back to Henze's point, how has it come to pass that so little scholarship on the shape and shaping of the Psalms considers the reception history of the text? Henze observes (I hope wryly), "We can no longer pretend that we are the first who read the psalms and who observe that adjacent psalms are linked by word-pairs. The irony of skipping from the biblical period directly to the present could not be greater with any other biblical book, precisely in light of the consistent employment of the psalms in study, devotion and prayer, individual and public, Jewish and Christian, for two millennia."²⁶ Even so, we cannot fail to acknowledge, as he does, the hermeneutical chasm between pre-modern and modern modes of exegesis. This chasm, however, is not unbridgeable, and I propose that the connection between the canonical shaping of the Psalter and Augustine's reading of them is one way of bridging this gap. Let us turn, then, to an overview of Augustine's *Enarrationes* and how they are related to collective reinterpretation.

Augustine's method of reading the Psalms is based primarily on his Christology and ecclesiology, both of which grew out of the New Testament. Since Augustine repeats so often throughout the *Enarrationes* the NT verses that justify his reading, I will abstract these for now without referring directly to the commentary of any particular Psalm.²⁷ The first comes from the encounter between Jesus and Saul in Acts 9. Christ's words to Saul here are as formative

25 Patrick D. Miller, *Interpreting the Psalms* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1986), 143.

26 Henze, "Patristic Interpretations," 147.

27 Michael Cameron includes an extensive list of passages where Augustine discusses the *Totus Christus* in his dissertation chapter on the topic. See Cameron, "Totus Christus," 273, n. 4.

for Augustine as they would be for Paul in his later writings: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" For Augustine, this was telling. Why did he not say, "Why are you persecuting my followers?" Christ was in Heaven with a glorified body, no longer susceptible to harm. How, then, could he speak of Saul as persecuting him? Augustine, echoing Paul in Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12, says that it is because the whole Christ is constituted by the head and body. When the body is harmed, the head is expected to speak out on behalf of the body, just as a person would do. As Augustine says, if someone steps on my foot, I say, "You stepped on me." It is the tongue that speaks, and even though no one stepped on my tongue, it speaks for the body of which the foot is also a part.²⁸ Thus, Christ can speak for any part of the body and any part of the body that speaks, speaks as Christ. As Augustine says in the same passage, "Whether the head speaks or the members speak, the one Christ speaks."²⁹

As Amy Oden shows in her dissertation on the *Enarrationes*,³⁰ Augustine often uses this body imagery in several different ways. One, also rooted in the New Testament, is that Christ and the Church have become one flesh. When St. Paul develops this idea in Ephesians, he appeals directly to Gen 2:24 and says, "This is a great mystery, and I mean it in reference to Christ and the Church" (Eph 5:32). Because of this marriage, Christ and the Church really are one flesh, and, therefore, as Augustine says, speak with one voice.³¹

The final interpretive principle that enables Augustine to see the *Totus Christus* as the voice of the Psalms is a combination of his belief in the unity of Scripture and the attribution of Psalms to Christ within the New Testament itself. We will focus primarily on the latter of these here. Throughout the Gospel narratives, especially during the Passion, the evangelists place different Psalms on the lips of Jesus. It is impossible to read these narratives and not see Ps 22 (21) in almost every line. Even Jesus' final words from the cross are none other than the beginning of Ps 22: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me." And in Luke's Gospel, he recites the words from Ps 31:6 (30): "Into your hands, I commit my spirit" (cf. Luke 23:46). It is not the Gospels alone that present Christ as the speaker of various Psalms. Hebrews 10, to give another example,

28 Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* 140.3 in *Expositions on the Psalms* VI, 304.

29 Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps.* 140.3 in *Expositions on the Psalms* VI, 303.

30 Amy G. Oden, "Dominant Images for the Church in Augustine's *Enarrationes in Psalmos*: A Study in Augustine's Ecclesiology" (Ph.D. diss., Southern Methodist University, 1990), especially 61–111.

31 One of the clearest and best-developed examples of this is in *Enarr. in Ps.* 138:2 in *Expositions of the Psalms*, Vol. VI, 256–258.

has Christ speaking the words of Psalm 40.³² Thus, as Cameron says, Augustine's decision to read the Psalms as the voice of the *Totus Christus* "was rooted not in a bishop's exegesis of Ps. 37 from his *cathedra*, but in Jesus' exegesis of Ps. 21 [MT Ps 22] from his *crux* (Matt 27:46 = Mark 15:34)."³³

Let us look briefly at one of the many examples of Augustine's hermeneutic of the *Totus Christus* and how it functions in his reading.³⁴ Ps 18 (cf. 2 Sam 22:2–51) is one of Gunkel's 10 royal Psalms and bears an historical superscription putting the words in the mouth of David when "the LORD delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul." Beginning with the words, "I love thee, O LORD, my strength," most of the Psalm is in the first person singular. Augustine says of this Psalm, "Accordingly Christ and the Church, the whole Christ, Head and body, are speaking here when the psalm begins, *I will love you, Lord, my strength*."³⁵ Taking a giant leap to the end of the psalm, we find something interesting. It closes with a vow of praise as in so many psalms, followed by this: "Great triumphs he gives to his king, and shows steadfast love to his anointed, to David and his descendants for ever" (18:50). In standard poetic parallelism, "king" and "anointed" are naturally linked, but these are further specified as "David and his descendants for ever." Setting aside for now the oddity that David himself would speak these words, it is fascinating that David's descendants (זרעו) seem to be included as part of the anointed (משיחו).³⁶ Regarding this final verse, Augustine says, "Now whatever is said in this psalm and cannot apply in strict terms to the Lord himself, the Head, should be referred to the Church; for here the whole Christ is speaking, and all his members are contained in him."³⁷ What makes this particular psalm even more fascinating is that the Midrash to this Psalm makes the same interpretive move at the beginning: "R. Yudan taught in the name of R. Judah: All that David said in his Book of Psalms, applies to himself, to all Israel, and to all the ages."³⁸ It is remarkable that two rival traditions developed such similar readings both here and elsewhere.³⁹ This is precisely why I am working now on showing how

32 On this and the other Psalms used in Hebrews, see Harold W. Attridge, "The Psalms in Hebrews," in *The Psalms in the New Testament*, 197–212.

33 Cameron, "Totus Christus," 285.

34 Again, see Cameron, "Totus Christus," 273, n. 4 for a complete list of such passages.

35 Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps. 17:2* in *Expositions of the Psalms*, Vol. 1, 189.

36 Other similar occurrences with a potentially collective identity of the משיח are at the end of Ps 28 and in Hab 3:13 (?).

37 Augustine, *Enarr. in Ps. 17:51* in *Expositions of the Psalms*, Vol. 1, 198.

38 Mid. Teh. 18.1; cf. 4.1 and 24.3. Braude, *Midrash on Psalms*, 230. Sarna, *Songs of the Heart*, 4.

39 Though the readings are similar, they are not the same. Further work must be done to

these Jewish and Christian ways of reading these texts are not simply foreign impositions on the text but arise out of a method of reading and rereading that was already present through the editing of the Psalms. Yes, Augustine's hermeneutic is based mainly on his Christology and ecclesiology, derived from his reading of the New Testament. Yet it is also his sensitivity to some of the dynamics of the Psalms themselves that allow him to see the *Totus Christus* where we would not expect it.

Sometimes the Psalms do shift in voice between the singular and plural (e.g. Ps 44) or between human and divine speech (Pss 89 and 95). How should Jews and Christians receive this collection, which consists mostly of prayers to God while at the same time acknowledging that they are also, in some sense, God's word to us? Psalm 1, which was probably added to the collection at a late stage, encourages its readers to look at the entire book through the lens of Torah. The Psalms are not simply humanity reaching out to God, but a response to God's intervention in Israel's history as found in the Torah.⁴⁰ One might also argue that the editor who placed Ps 1 at the head of this collection was also doing so in order to imbue the book with a level of authority comparable to that of Torah. In so doing, this collection of human prayers seemingly arising from human initiative is taken up into Israel's story and become, in some sense, part of God's revelation to Israel. In Augustine's reading, not only is the subject of the Psalms the *Totus Christus*, but the Psalms are like Christ. In them, the divine and human intermingle, and they act as a mediator between God and humanity, where God gives us the very words to offer back to him in sorrow and joy, both of which become an occasion for praise.⁴¹ And like the Eucharist itself, for Augustine, the Psalms act as a balm that heals human pride.⁴²

highlight the distinctions between these Jewish and Christian readings of the Psalms and how they relate to the phenomenon of collective reinterpretation in their editing.

40 See Brevard Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1979), 513; van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture*, 103; G.H. Wilson, *The Editing of the Hebrew Psalter*, 204–207; David M. Howard, Jr., "Editorial Activity in the Psalter: A State-of-the-Field Survey," in *The Shape and Shaping of the Psalter*, 52–70.

41 For a clear exposition of this, clearly based on Augustine, see Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together—Prayerbook of the Bible* (trans. Daniel W. Bloesch and James H. Burtness; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1996), 155–157.

42 See Rudolph Arbesmann, "The Concept of 'Christus Medicus' in St. Augustine," *Traditio* 10 (1954): 1–28.

Epilogue: Future Prospects in Reception History

Dan Batovici

Granted, the title of the volume covers quite a lot of terrain, as most of biblical studies fit under the umbrella of ‘authoritative texts,’ and virtually any textual filiations fits under that of ‘reception-history.’ However, while the contributions included here all further specific discussions in their specific fields, they are tackling a variety of reception questions, applied to a variety of texts in different corpora, normally treated separately for reception-historical purposes.

Indeed, the aim of the volume was precisely to illustrate just how wide the umbrella of ‘reception-history’ can be, and to sample the varied range of topics, concerns and approaches it can accommodate, and ultimately to suggest that they could be exported from one single-corpus field (e.g. NT studies) to another in a meaningful manner. In the closing I should like to only briefly draw attention to three areas in reception studies—beyond biblical intertextuality—which deserve further attention and which are likely to prove productive in the following years.

Patristic Reception

While patristic reception of the bible is by no means a new topic—represented in this volume by the contributions of Michael J. Clark, Mark W. Elliott, Moshe Blidstein, Madalina Toca, Justin A. Mihoc, and Kevin Haley—it is far from being a central one, and larger scale, systematic treatment is still wanting. For instance, patristic reception can lack entirely from surveys of scholarship on a given biblical book;¹ moreover, most commentaries offer only cursory treatment in form of dispersed notes, relying at times on secondary literature more than on the primary sources, or, when separate treatment is offered, this tends to be minimal.² Despite quite some interest for the earliest reception of the New

1 See for instance M. Dubis, “Research on 1 Peter: A Survey of Scholarly Literature since 1985,” *Currents in Biblical Research* 4 (2006), 199–239.

2 To keep with the bibliography on 1 Peter as an example, so do for instance W.A. Grudem, *The First Epistle of Peter: An Introduction and Commentary* (The Tyndale New Testament Commentaries 17; Leicester: IVP, 1988), J.B. Green, *1 Peter* (The Two Horizons NT Commentary; Grand Rapids/Cambridge 2007), K.H. Jobes, *1 Peter* (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005), respectively N. Brox, *Der erste*

Testament,³ comprehensive treatments of the wider patristic reception are still lacking for most individual biblical books.

The three book series mentioned in the introduction are important in this sense as they do include Patristic reception, and are important steps toward this desideratum. The *Blackwell Bible Commentaries* (edited by J. Sawyer, C. Rowland, J. Kovacs) contains ten volumes published since 2003, and is an important project on the reception of biblical books, in which patristic exegesis does have a place, but inevitably a limited one, since several other strands of reception are explored as well, in a 'holistic' approach. The two other series, *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture* (edited by T.C. Oden and published by IVP, twenty nine volumes since 2001) and *The Church's Bible* (edited by R.L. Wilken, published by Eerdmans; four volumes since 2003) focus on the Patristic reception of a given biblical book, but offer mainly a selection of Patristic quotations on scriptural verses, as a kind of modern *catenae*, with no further commentary.

By far, the most extended treatment of the patristic reception of (too few so far) biblical books is offered by the *Novum Testamentum Patristicum* series. Edited by A. Merkt, T. Nicklas, J. Verheyden, and published by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, the series aims to offer a systematic treatment of the patristic reception and exegesis of each book of the New Testament in Late Antiquity, instead of a selection of translations of specific passages from patristic works. The project envisages forty commentary volumes, and six supplementary ones, to which some forty scholars from ten countries are contributing.⁴ So far three volume have appeared: one on Galatians,⁵ one on 1 Peter

Petrusbrief (EKK 21; Zürich: Benziger, 1986), or J.H. Elliott, *First Peter: A New Translation with Introduction* (AncB 37B; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 2001).

- 3 To mention but a few contributions: É. Massaux, *Influence de l'Evangile de saint Matthieu sur la littérature chrétienne avant saint Irénée* (BETL 75; Gembloux 1950; Leuven 1986 [réimpression anastatique]); H. Köster, *Synoptische Überlieferung bei den Apostolischen Vätern*, TU 65 (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1957); A. Gregory, *The Reception of Luke and Acts in the Period before Irenaeus. Looking for Luke in the Second Century* (WUNT 2/169; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003); C.E. Hill, *The Johannine Corpus in the Early Church* (Oxford: OUP, 2004); A. Gregory and C. Tuckett (eds.), *The New Testament in the Apostolic Fathers* (Oxford: OUP, 2005); M.J. Kok, *The Gospel on the Margins: The Reception of Mark in the Second Century* (Minneapolis MN: Fortress Press, 2015).
- 4 A. Merkt, T. Nicklas, and J. Verheyden, "Das Novum Testamentum Patristicum (NTP): Ein Projekt zur Erforschung von Rezeption und Auslegung des Neuen Testaments in frühchristlicher und spätantiker Zeit," *Early Christianity* 6.4 (2015) 573–595.
- 5 M. Meiser, *Galater* (NTP 9; Göttingen: V&R, 2007). On this volume see the review-article by M.M. Mitchell, "A Guidebook for the Frontier of Patristic Interpretation of the New Testa-

1:1–2:10,⁶ and a supplementary volume on the New Testament reception in early apocryphal literature.⁷ What such volumes offer—especially the one on Galatians—is the full mapping of the patristic interpretation of the successive interpretative units, reveal the richness of the interpretative traditions and the complex relationships between them, and the interplay of theology with exegesis.

This approach, involving thorough surveys of patristic exegesis could be extended to the books of the Old Testament,⁸ not least for the sake of comparing the reception of the two corpora beyond the earliest Christianity. This could be extended to the pseudepigraphical literature (cf. M. Toca's contribution in this volume), and to the early Christian literature which eventually did not make it into the biblical canon. This brings about the next area of reception.

The Reception of Non-Canonical Writings as Authoritative Texts

It is hoped that this volume—through the contributions signed by James Davila, David J. Larsen, Moshe Blidstein, Madalina Toca, and Marijana Vuković—shows convincingly that questions about authority and reception history are not limited to biblical books, and can be applied with profit to non-biblical books as well. It is quite common, when addressing the question of the authority in Late Antiquity of what we consider today non-canonical texts, to run into a number of widespread assumptions about their transmission and standing in Late Antiquity, which can only be verified by the means of in-depth studies of their reception.

ment," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 135 (2010), 121–130, and the author's response, M. Meiser, "My Galatians in (Self-)Critical Review," *Theologische Literaturzeitung* 135 (2010), 130–134.

6 A. Merkt, *1 Petrus 1:7–2:10* (NTP 21; Göttingen: V&R, 2015).

7 J.-M. Roessli and T. Nicklas (eds), *Christian Apocrypha: Receptions of the New Testament in Ancient Christian Apocrypha* (Novum Testamentum Patristicum 26; Göttingen: V&R, 2014).

8 Numerous publications present this topic as an important direction of research direction, e.g. Y.M. Duval, *Le Livre de Jonas dans la littérature chrétienne grecque et latine: Sources et influence du Commentaire sur Jonas de saint Jérôme* (Paris: Institute d'Etudes Agustiniennes, 1973); A. Tarabochia Canavero, *Esegesi biblica e cosmologia: Note sull'interpretazione patristica e medioevale di Genesi 1:2* (Coll. Sc. filos. 30; Milan: Vita e Pensiero, 1981); M.J. Rondeau, *Les commentaires patristiques du Psautier (3e–5e siècles), 1: Les travaux des Pères grecs et latins sur le Psautier. Recherches et bilan* (Orientalia Christiana Analecta 219; Rome: Pontif. Inst. stud. orient., 1982); W. Kinzig, *Erbin Kirche: Die Auslegung von Psalm 5, 1 in den Psalmenhomilien des Asterius und in der Alten Kirche* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter Verlag, 1990).

For instance, one assumption is that at least a number of early Christian apocryphal writings were, at some point, candidates for, or on the verge of, the inclusion in the emerging biblical canon. To give an example, the title of a recent volume on the apocryphal literature is telling by itself: *En marge du canon*.⁹ The implication of the title is then spelled out by one of the two editors: the canonical writings and the apocryphal writings should be regarded as “un couple bien assorti,” where the existence of the former group “implique nécessairement” the existence of the latter, and the other way around.¹⁰ However, one might argue that such an implication is more the result of the modern choice of concepts (‘apocryphal’ defined by opposition to ‘canonical’) with respect to this literature, than something reflected by ancient testimonies. Indeed, the available sources about their reception do not seem to support the existence of such claims of canonicity for many of the apocryphal texts. For instance, the *Gospel of Mary* is virtually unmentioned by early Christian authors, “even when they discuss the existence of (possibly dangerous, or heretical) non-canonical texts.”¹¹ The same holds true, and even more so, for the all the unidentified texts in the papyri which are normally published as ‘extra-canonical gospels’, ‘uncanonical gospel,’ or ‘gospel fragments’, as P.Egerton 2 + P.Köln 6.255, P. Oxy. 76.5072, P.Oxy. 2.210, P.Oxy. 5.840, P.Merton 2.51, P.Oxy. 10.1224, P.Cair Cat. 10735,¹² and others which were proposed to be part of a gospel mentioned in ancient sources (e.g. the Gospel of Peter), but the proposal was

9 A. Gagne and J.-F. Racine, *En marge du canon: Etudes sur les écrites apocryphes juifs et chrétiens* (Paris: Cerf, 2012).

10 J.-F. Racine, “Écrits canoniques et écrits apocryphes: un couple bien assorti,” in Gagne and Racine, *En marge du canon*, 13–31, at c13–14.

11 C. Tuckett, *The Gospel of Mary* (OEGT; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), at 3.

12 For example, P.Egerton 2 was first published as H.I. Bell and T.C. Skeat, *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri* (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1935) and P.Köln 6.255 as M. Gronewald, “255. Unbekanntes Evangelium oder Evangelienharmonie (Fragment aus dem ‘Evangelium Egerton’),” *Kölner Papyri* 6 (ARWAW PapyCol VII; Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1987), 136–145; P.Oxy. 5.840 as B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, “840. Fragment of an Uncanonical Gospel,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Part v* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1908), 1–10; P.Oxy. 10.1224 as A.S. Hunt, “1224. Uncanonical Gospel,” in B.P. Grenfell and A.S. Hunt, *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri, Part x* (London: Egypt Exploration Fund, 1914), 1–10. The latest published fragment is P. Oxy. 76.5072, as J. Chapa, “Uncanonical Gospel?,” in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Volume LXXVI* (London: 2011), 1–19. The question mark was then dropped in the subsequent publication, in favour of inverted commas: J. Chapa, “A newly published ‘gospel fragment’,” *Early Christianity* 3/3 (2012), 381–389.

not accepted in subsequent scholarship, as are P.Vindob.G 2325 and P. Oxy. 60.4009.¹³

As a result, some scholars point out that there may be other books than the apocrypha, normally edited in other corpora (e.g. the so-called Apostolic fathers), with a perhaps better claim to having been at some point candidates for inclusion into the biblical canon, the usual example being the *Shepherd of Hermas*,¹⁴ due mainly to a far more developed reception as authoritative text in early Christianity. One other current assumption concerning the circulation of apocryphal books in early and late-antique Christianity is that they have survived mainly despite the general rejection of mainstream Patristic authors. This is a widely spread assumption that can be exemplified by a quotation from A.M. Luijendijk; in an article in which the author argues that the *Gospel of Thomas* might have been read in private setting but perhaps also in Christian worship in Early Christianity, the author notes:

Obviously, I do not derive this claim from the writings of ancient church leaders. They answered the question whether the Gospel of Thomas counted as sacred scripture in the negative. As so often in the history of the early Christian movement, their assessment has been influential and definitive.¹⁵

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- 13 P.Vindob.G 2325 was first published as G. Bickell, "Ein Papyrusfragment eines nichtkanonischen Evangeliums," *ZKT* 9 (1885), 498–504, and *ZKT* 10 (1886), 208–209. D. Lührmann argued this is a fragment of the *Gospel of Peter*, in D. Lührmann, *Die apokryph gewordenen Evangelien: Studien zu neuen Texten und neuen Fragen* (NovT Supp. 112; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 87–90, but this attribution did not gain acceptance in subsequent studies: T.J. Kraus, "P.Vindob.G 2325: The So-called Fayum Gospel—Re-edition and Some Critical Conclusions," in his *Ad Fontes: Original Manuscripts and Their Significance for Studying Early Christianity* (TENT 3; Leiden: Brill, 2007), 69–94, at 221 and 225; P. Foster, "Are there any Early Fragments of the So-called *Gospel of Peter*?" *NTS* 52 (2006), 1–28, esp. 19–22. The same goes for P. Oxy. 60.4009, first published as D. Lührmann, "POx 4009: Ein neues Fragment des Petrusevangeliums?" *NovT* 35 (1993), 309–410, reedited one year later by D. Lührmann and P.J. Parsons in R.A. Coles et al., *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri: Volume LX* (London: Egypt Exploration Society, 1994), 1–5.
 - 14 L.L. Johns, in his response to L.M. McDonald's paper, in J.H. Charlesworth and L.M. McDonald, *Jewish and Christian Scriptures: The Function of 'Canonical' and 'Non-Canonical' Religious Texts* (JCTS 7; London/New York: T&T Clark, 2010), at 43.
 - 15 A.M. Luijendijk, "Reading the *Gospel of Thomas* in the Third Century: Three Oxyrhynchus Papyri and Origen's *Homilies*," in *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context/Lire les papyrus du Nouveau Testament dans leur contexte*, edited by C. Clivaz and J. Zumstein (BETL 242; Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 241–267, at 242. Similarly, in A.M. Luijendijk,

Other scholars, however, are weary of such straightforward assessments; S.F. Johnson, for instance, refers to “the currently fashionable ‘disjunctive’ model of early Christian and late antique literature,” which “posits a variety of literature available in the earliest Christian period which was subsequently suppressed and destroyed under the authoritarian regime of the Constantinian and post-Constantinian Christian empires.”¹⁶ Further study of the reception and use of what we designate today as pseudepigrapha, apocryphal literature, or Apostolic fathers can verify such claims, addressing for instance the question as to whether their circulation in Late Antiquity has to do at all with the formation of the canon, or indeed with any sort of conflicting authorities.

The Artefact Reception

The last area of reception studies briefly referenced here is that which considers manuscripts to be landmarks in its reception of the text they carry. Even though it is not featured in this volume, this is well worth mentioning here due to its complementarity to the reception areas discussed above, as well as to the resurgence of studies in this domain over the last decade. Indeed, as textual criticism switches from studying the manuscripts for sole purpose of editing the texts they contain, to studying the way they reflect the circulation of these texts, questions about their use and authority emerge.¹⁷ A number of such

“Jesus says: ‘There Is Nothing Buried That Will Not Be Raised.’ A Late-Antique Shroud with Gospel of Thomas Logion 5 in Context,” *ZAC* 15 (2011), 389–410, at 409: “With the fifth- or sixth-century quotation of the Gospel of Thomas on the funerary bandage, we thus observe the tenacity and longevity of an apocryphal text in spite of ecclesiastical polemics.”

- 16 S.F. Johnson, “Apocrypha and the Literary Past in Late Antiquity,” in *From Rome to Constantinople: Studies in Honour of Averil Cameron*, edited by H. Amirav and Bas te Haar Romeny (Late Antique History and Religion 1; Leuven: Peeters, 2007), 47–66, at 50. As examples for this he lists B.D. Ehrman, *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); B.D. Ehrman, *Lost Scriptures: Books that Did not Make it into the New Testament* (Oxford/New York: Oxford University Press, 2003); and E. Pagels, “Constantine and the Catholic Church,” in her *Beyond Belief The Secret Gospel of Thomas* (New York: Random House, 2003), 143–185.
- 17 To mention but a few contributions: Hurtado, L.W. *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006); T.J. Kraus, *Ad Fontes: Original Manuscripts and Their Significance for Studying Early Christianity* (TENT 3; Leiden: Brill, 2007); A.M. Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord: Early Christians and the Oxyrhynchus Papyri* (HTS 60; Cambridge, MS: Harvard University Press, 2008); T.J. Kraus

contributions aim to even discuss the canonicity of a text starting from its manuscripts and its physical features, as the presence of the so-called *nomina sacra*, reading aids or the format (codex-roll) of the manuscript.¹⁸

Specifically for the matter at hand, in a very interesting essay, J. Chapa investigates the reception history of Psalm 90 (LXX), starting from the fact that among the manuscripts (continuous or not) up to the 9th century the Psalms are far better represented than any other biblical book, with 209 witnesses, in the second position being Matthew, with 50.¹⁹ The best represented Psalm, however, is Psalm 90, and Chapa discusses why this text was so appealing to its Egyptian users by placing its 34 witnesses and their possible use in the socio-cultural context that forms their background. Chapa discerns three directions of use: liturgical, scholarly, and apotropaic. To the first category he assigns 4 manuscripts, to the second 1, and to the latter the rest of 29 witnesses. The bigger part pertains then to the papyri, parchments and tablets susceptible of reflecting an apotropaic use of Psalm 90. The author concludes that Psalm 90 has enjoyed (and still is) a largely apotropaic function, due to its content, and also that further study of its manuscripts can explain the popular traditions at use in the social location of its reception.

and T. Nicklas, eds. *Early Christian Manuscripts: Examples of Applied Method and Approach* (TENT 5; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010); C.E. Hill and M.J. Kruger (eds.), *The Early Text of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); T.A. Wayment, *The Text of the New Testament Apocrypha (100–400)* (New York/London: Bloomsbury, 2013); W.A. Smith, *A Study of the Gospels in Codex Alexandrinus: Codicology, Palaeography and Scribal Hands* (NTTSD 48; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2014); Brice C. Jones, *New Testament Texts on Greek Amulets from Late Antiquity* (LSNT 554; London/Oxford/New York/New Delhi/Sydney: Bloomsbury, 2016).

- 18 See, for instance, Trobisch, *The First Edition of the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), L.W. Hurtado, *The Earliest Christian Artifacts: Manuscripts and Christian Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI/ Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2006). For a critique of these two, see C.M. Tuckett, “*Nomina sacra*: Yes and No?,” in *Biblical Canons*, ed. J.-M. Auwers and H.J. de Jonge (BETL 163; Leuven: Peeters/Leuven University Press, 2003), 431–458. See also S. Charlesworth, “Public and Private: Second- and Third-Century Gospel Manuscripts,” in C.A. Evans and H.D. Zacharias, eds. *Jewish and Christian Scripture as Artifact and Canon* (LSTS 70; London: T&T Clark, 2009), 148–175; S. Charlesworth, “Indicators of ‘Catholicity’ in Early Gospel Manuscripts,” in Hill and Kruger, *The Early Text of the New Testament*, 37–48; T. Bokedal, *The Formation and Significance of the Christian Biblical Canon: A Study in Text, Ritual and Interpretation* (London/New York: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2013).
- 19 J. Chapa, “Su demoni e angeli: Il Salmo 90 nel suo contesto,” in Guido Bastianini and Angelo Casanova (eds.), *I papiri letterari Cristiani: atti del Convegno internazionale di studi in memoria di Mario Naldini. Firenze, 10–11 giugno 2010* (Studi e Testi di Papirologia N.s. 13. Firenze: Istituto Papirologico “G. Vitelli,” 2011), 59–90, at 59.

To give one example from apocryphal literature, L. Hurtado notes that, when compared to P.Oxy. 208+1781 (fragments of John designated as P5) which has 27 lines per page, P.Oxy. 1.1 (containing fragments of the Gospel of Thomas, which he estimates to have had 37–38 lines per page, while being of the same shape and size) seems written in smaller characters, “may signal that P.Oxy 1 was copied for personal reading/usage,” and the basis for this suggestion is the fact that it “is usually assumed [that] fewer lines per page and somewhat larger letter-sizes reflect a copy prepared for ease of reading (perhaps public reading in particular),”²⁰ whereas the P.Oxy. 1.1 has relatively smaller letters and more lines. Similarly, he considers P.Oxy. 4.654 and P.Oxy. 4.655 to be personal copies, for the latter for instance on the basis that this is a “small artefact with small writing.”²¹ On the whole—in a different contribution—L. Hurtado doubts that the three surviving Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of Thomas “reflect a regard for this text as ‘scripture’ to be read in worship and treated somehow authoritative for faith.”²² Yet A.M. Luijendijk, argues that while the surviving manuscripts of this writing indicate that it could have been read in private setting, they also could have been used in Christian worship and burial practices in Early Christianity.²³ For P.Oxy. 4.654, Luijendijk does not exclude the possibility that, even though a roll, since it is “inscribed with reader’s aids, the Thomas roll appears intended for reciting,” proposing further that it “might have been used in a liturgical setting,” or it “may have been intended for reading out loud in a different context, for instance in an educational setting,” or else “the scribe might have copied the punctuation from the *Vorlage*,” which would point to an exemplar “intended for declamation.”²⁴

20 Hurtado, L. “The Greek Fragments of the *Gospel of Thomas* as Artefacts: Papyrological Observations on Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 1, Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 654 and Papyrus Oxyrhynchus 655,” in J. Frey, E.E. Popkes and Jens Schröter (eds.), *Das Thomasevangelium: Entstehung—Rezeption—Theologie* (BZNW 157; Berlin/New York: de Gruyter, 2008), 19–32, at 23.

21 Hurtado, “The Greek Fragments of the *Gospel of Thomas* as Artefacts,” 28.

22 Hurtado, *Early Christian Artifacts*, 34, reacting specifically to the title of B. Layton, *The Gnostic Scriptures: A New Translation with Annotations and Introductions* (New York: Doubleday, 1987).

23 A.M. Luijendijk, “Reading the *Gospel of Thomas* in the Third Century: Three Oxyrhynchus Papyri and Origen’s *Homilies*,” in *Reading New Testament Papyri in Context/Lire les papyrus du Nouveau Testament dans leur contexte*, edited by C. Clivaz and J. Zumstein (BETL 242; Leuven/Paris/Walpole, MA: Peeters, 2011), 241–267, at 242. Similarly, in A.M. Luijendijk, “‘Jesus says: ‘There Is Nothing Buried That Will Not Be Raised.’” A Late-Antique Shroud with Gospel of Thomas Logion 5 in Context,” *ZAC* 15 (2011), 389–410.

24 Luijendijk, “Reading the *Gospel of Thomas* in the Third Century,” 253–254.

In any event, and to conclude this brief epilogue, it would be more than useful, in order be able to verify these stances against a wider background, to have studies that do not restrict themselves to only one field. On the one hand questions posed in New testament research, for instance, are likely to be productive when applied on other corpora of texts. But more importantly, claims made on New Testament manuscripts could and should be verified by comparison with non-NT manuscripts, and beyond that, with Old Testament and Pseudepigrapha manuscripts.

Index of Sources

Old Testament / Hebrew Bible

Genesis

1–3	207
1	107, 164
1:12	15, 17
1:24	17
1:25	15, 17
2	164
3–11	160
5:1	77
6:20	15, 17
7:14	15, 17
9:3	246n11
14	114, 116
14:8	114
14:18–20	112
15	130n22, 137–139
15:6	137
21	132
22	125, 130n22, 132, 134, 136–140
22:1	132–133, 139–140
22:12	131, 133, 138
22:17	90, 139
24:1–25:11	45n14
26:4	90
27:1–28:9	45n14
29:1	70
32	133
38:30	70
41:3, 4, 19, 20, 27	96n6
47:27–50:26	45n14
49:1–27	79

Exodus

3	76n22
15:1–18	79
17:14	77
21:7–11	164n8
24:7	78n28

Leviticus

11	11–13, 243
11:14	15, 17
11:15	19

11:16	14, 17
11:18	15
11:19	15, 17
11:22	14, 17
11:26	255n29
11:29–30	11, 13–19
11:31	18
12–15	244
19:4	53n7
26:1	53n7
26:30	53n9

Numbers

10:35–36	79
21	66
21:1–3	66
21:4–9	66, 233
21:10–13	66
21:14–18	81
21:21–27	66
23:3–24	79

Deuteronomy

4:28	53n5
5:7	55n19
14	243
14:13	17
14:15	15, 17, 18
14:16	14
14:18	17
17:14–20	69
17:18–19	78n28
21:15–17	164n8
27–29	58
27:15	53n5
30:1–5	78
31:29	53n5
32–34	45n14
32:1–43	79
32:17	56n20
32:39	55n19
32:1–43	79
33:2–29	79

Joshua

1:7–8	78
8:31–35	78
10:12–14	67, 82
18:4, 8–10	77
23:1–24:31	45n14
23:6	78
24:26	77, 78

Judges

1:4	50
3:29	50
4:15	50
5	67n2
5:1–30	79
6:3	70
6:33	70
7	50
8:10	50
8:32	45n14
9:7–15	71
9:56	46
11:33	50
13	50
15:18	48
16	42
16:28–31	41
20	50

1 Samuel

1:1–12:25	91n127
2:1–10	35n58, 79
5–6	14
5:60	15
6:4–5	16
8:1–22	69
10:17–27	69
10:25	83
12:1–25	69
15:1–16:13	91n127
16	38n64
19:18–24	91n127
22:5	91n127
25:1	45n14
28:3–20	91n127
28:19	46
29:9	119

2 Samuel

1:17–27	67–68, 83
1:18	68n4
2:18–23	47n17
3:33–34	68n5
7:2–17	91n127
7:22	55n19
11	47n17
11:14–15	77
12:1–15, 25	91n127
12:13	148
14:17, 20	119
21:17	47
22:2–51	318
24:1	134n36
24:1–25	90n123
24:11–14	91n127

1 Kings

1:1–11:43	91n130
1–11	71, 72n12, 84n52
1–2	76
1:1–2:12	45n14
1:8–45	91n127
2:1	35
2:3	78
3:3–28	71
4:13	34
5:9–14	71, 84
5:12–14	69
8:7	33
8:12–13	68, 83
8:30, 34, 36, 39	151
8:53	70
10:1–10, 23–25	71
10:6	38
11:6	38
11:26–14:20	84n53
11:29–39	91n130
11:41	71, 84
11:43–12:24	87n83
12:15	91n130
12:21–24	91n132
14:19	84, 91n130
14:21–31	87n83
14:29	86n78, 87, 91n132
14:31–15:8	87n84
15:7	87, 92n134
15:8–24	87n88

15:23	32-33, 87, 89n13	9:1-10:36	85n66
15:24	87n90	9:27-28	87n91
15:25-32	84n54	10:1-3, 6	77
15:26	32-33	10:31	78n28
15:27-16:6	84n57	10:34	85
15:27-30	47	10:35	85n68
15:31	84	11:1-12:20	87n92
15:35	32	12:20	87, 87n94, 92n136
16:1-13	32	13:1-9	85n68
16:1	32-33	13:8	85
16:4	34	13:9-13	85n70
16:5	84	13:12	85, 86n74
16:6	34-35	13:13	86n74
16:6-14	85n58	13:14-25	45n14
16:7	36-37, 53n5	14:1-20	87n94
18:8-20	85n59	14:2-18	91n130
16:1-4, 7, 12	90n120	14:6	78
16:9-14	47	14:15	86, 86n77
16:12	37-38	14:16, 23-29	86n77
16:13	38	14:18	87, 89n114
16:14	85	14:21-22	88m95
16:16-28	85n62	14:25	72
16:18-20	47	14:28	86
16:20	85	15:1-7	88n95
16:27	85	15:6	88, 92n138
16:28-22:40	85n63	15:7, 32-38	88n96
17:11	34	15:8-12	86n78
19	76n22	15:10-15	86n79
20	72	15:11	86
21:8-10	77	15:14-22	86n80
22:1-51	87n90	15:15	86
22:13-40	47	15:21	86
22:39	85	15:22-26	86n81
22:40, 51-53	85n64	15:25-31	86n82
22:45	90n120	15:26	86
22:46	87	15:31	86
		15:36	88, 89n106
2 Kings		15:38-16:20	88n98
1:1-18	85n64	16:19	88, 89n115
1:3, 6	55n18	16:20	88n99
1:18	85	17:13	78n28
2:15-18	46n15	18-20	314
3:11	93n133	18:1-20:21	88n99
5:3-15	1447n23	19:14	77
5:5-7	77	19:18	53n5, 56, 56n20
5:7	55n19	19:20-20:19	90n117
5:15	55n19	19:25	70n9
8:16-24	87n91	20:1-11	45n14
8:23	87	20:12	77

2 Kings (*cont.*)

20:20	88, 89n117
20:21–21:18	88n100
21:8	78
21:17	88, 92n141
21:18–26	88n102
21:24–23:30	88n103
21:25	88
22–23	78
22:17	53n5
23:18	78
23:28	88, 89n109
23:29–30	48
23:30–34	88n103
23:34–24:6	88n104
24:5	88, 89n110, 89n111, 89n112
25:4	78
34:25	53n5

Isaiah

1:1	88n95
2:8	53n7
2:18	53n7
6:1	88n95
9:5	119
9:6	119
10:11	53n7
16:12	53n10
17:8	53n5
19:1	53n7
19:3	53n7
21:9	53n8
25	162
25:8	205n22
31:3	55n19
31:7	53n7
35–39	314
37:5–38:8	90n117
37:14	77
37:19	53n5, 56, 56n20
38	313
39:1	77
39:3–8	90n117
40–55	97
40:12–31	97–99
40:15	94–111
40:17	108
40:19–20	56–57

41:5–7	56
41:8	129
42:6	147
43:9	99n14
43:10	55n19
43:25	151
44:6	55n19, 57
44:9–20	56–57
45:14	55n19
45:21	57
46:1–2	56
46:6	53n7
46:5–7	56–57
49	55
52:10	99n14
66:1–2	62n37

Jeremiah

1:16	53n5
2:11	56n20
5:7	56n20
10:9	53n5
16:20	56, 56n20
25:11, 12	78n25
26:5	53n5
29:1–29	77
29:10	78n25
29:24–28	77
36:1–28	78
44:8	53n5
45:1–5	78
50:1–51:58	78
51:8	53n5
51:59–64	78

Ezekiel

1:26–28	117
28:2	55n19
28:9	55n19
47:10	15

Hosea

8:6	56n20
14:4	53n5

Amos

1:1	88n95
-----	-------

Jonah		3	312, 315
2:9	316	3:9	315
		8	237
Micah		14	312
5:12	53n5	18	318
7:18	148n28, 151	22	118
8:6	56	22:22	316
		25	312
Nahum		27	118
2:8	14	28	312
		30	312
Habakkuk		32:3-5	149n29
3:1-16	79	37	318
3:11	81	40	318
		41:4	149n29
Zephaniah		45	118
2:14	16	49:2	14
		51	312
Zechariah		51:16-17	316
12:8	119	51:20-21	315
14:5	88n95	69:30	316
		88	70
Malachi		88:1	84
2:7	120	89	70
3:22	78	89:1	84
		89:48	14
Daniel		95	118
2	53-54, 62	96:7	53n7
2:27	146	102	118
2:34	54	103:3	151
2:44-45	54	104	118
3:96	55n19	107:17	149n29
3	146	110	118, 313
3:12	147	110:1	300, 302, 305
3:31	178n32	110:4	112, 114
4:1-2	147	113:12	53n5
4:4	146	118	118
5:4	53n7, 53n12	129	312
5:23	53n7, 53n12	130	312, 315
6:26	147n23, 178n32	130:4	151
6:28	53n7, 53n12	131	312
7:22	162n6	132	69n7
9:2	78n25	134:15	53n5
9:11, 13	78	148	71
9:24	162n7		
Psalms		Proverbs	
2	118	1:1	70
2:7	313	25:1	70
		30:24-31	71

Proverbs (*cont.*)

30:28 16

Job

1-3 125, 132

1:1 131

1:7 129

1:8-9 130

4:2-6 134n34

4:6 130

4:7 134n34

4:12 134n34

11:17 14

12:7-9 71

25:5 239

31:17, 20 130

38-39 71

42:5 138

42:9 148n27

42:12 139

Odes of Solomon

2:17 56n20

2:21 56n20

2:39 55n19

Esther

1:22 77

2:23 78

3:12-15 77

4:6-22 77

4:8 77

5:6-17 77

6:1-2 78

6:2-12 77

7:11-26 77

8:5, 9-14 77

9:20-32 77

10:2 78

Ezra

2:62 78n27

3:2 78

5:17-6:1 78

6:18 78

7:6 78

8:6 181n41

Nehemiah

1:8-9 78

3:1 78n26

6:5-7 77

7:64 78n27

8:1-19 78

12:1, 10-11 78n26

12:23-25 78

13:1 78

1 Chronicles

2:6 70, 84

6:42 84

9:1 75n19, 90

9:14-17 78

10:13-14 46

10:14-29:30 91n127

15:17, 19 70, 84

16:26 53n7

16:40 78n28

17:1-15 91n127

21:1-22:1 90n123

21:2 134n36

21:9-13 91n127

24-26 93n145

27:23-24 90

28:11-18 90n125

28:19 90

29:29-30 91

29:23 119

32:19 53n5

2 Chronicles

2:11-16 77

6:21, 25, 27, 30, 39 151

9:29 91

9:31-12:16 91n132

10:2-11:15 91n130

10:15 91n130

11:1-4 91n132

12:1 78n28

12:5-8 91n131

12:15 91, 92n134

13:1-22 92n134

13:1-20 91n130

13:22 92

13:8-9 56, 56n20

13:22 91n129, 91n132

14:1-16:14 89n112

16:11 89
 17:1–21:1 90n120
 17:9 78, 78n28
 19:2 90n120
 20:7 129
 20:34 76, 90
 21:12–15 77
 22:18 77n23
 24:27–25:28 89n114
 24:27 92
 25:26 89
 26:1–23 92n138
 26:22 92
 26:23–27:9 89n106
 27:7 89, 91n131
 27:9–28:27 89n115
 28:26 89, 91n131
 28:27–32:33 89n117
 29:25 91n127
 32:17 77
 32:20 90n117
 32:31 92n133
 32:32 76n21, 89, 92n138
 33:11–13 147n23
 33:18–19 92
 33:18 76
 35:4 93
 35:20–24 48
 35:25–27 89
 35:25 93
 35:26–27 93n146

36:4–8 89n112
 36:8 89

Judith

8:11–27 130n18
 8:18 53n6

Wisdom

11:1 171n8
 11:22 95
 14:8 53n6
 19:19 17

Baruch

44:7 56n20

2 Maccabees

3:31–35 147n24

Sirach

18:10 95
 26:22 95
 46:11–12 43
 50:17 120

Epistle of Jeremiah

1:14–71 56n20

Bel and the Dragon

1:5 53n6

Pseudepigrapha (in the broad sense)

Acts of Gad the Visionary 75, 91
Acts of Nathan the Prophet 75, 91
Acts of Samuel the Seer 75, 91
Acts of Shemiah the Prophet and Iddo the Visionary for Enrollment by Genealogy 75, 91
Acts of Solomon 65, 71, 84
Acts of the Kings of Israel and the Words of the Visionaries 92
Acts of Uzziah 75, 92
Amorite Victory Song 81
Apocalypse of Zephaniah 2:5 95
Blessing of Moses 79

Book commemorating the annihilation of the Amalekites 77
Book of the Chronicles (of the Kings of Media and Persia) 78
Book of the Chronicles of King David 76, 90
Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Israel 65, 72, 75n19, 76, 84–86
Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah 65, 73–74, 75n19, 76, 87–88
Book of the Generations of Adam 77
Book of the King of Israel 90
Book of the Kings of Israel and Judah 75–76, 89

- Book of the Kings of Judah and Israel* 75,
76n21, 89
- Book of the Law of God* 77–78
- Book of the Righteous (The Book of Jashar) or
the Book of the Song* 65, 67–70, 81–
83
- Book of the Wars of Yahweh* 65–67, 80–81
- Book on the Conduct of the Kingship* 69,
83
- King David's Plan from Yahweh for the Temple*
90
- Laments over the Fallen King Josiah* 76, 93
- Law of Moses* 78
- Letter from the prophet Elijah to King Jeroboam*
77
- Letter of David to Joab* 77
- Letter of Hiram, king of Tyre, to Solomon* 77
- Letter of Jeremiah to the elders of the exiles and
to the priests* 77
- Letter of Sanballat to Nehemiah* 77
- Letter of the King of Assyria to Hezekiah* 77
- Letter of the King of the Syrians to the King of
Israel regarding Naaman* 77
- Letters of Ahasuerus proclaiming husbandly
authority* 77
- Letters of Haman against the Jews* 77
- Letters of Jehu to the rulers of Samaria* 77
- Letters of Jezebel to the elders and nobles of
Naboth's city* 77
- Letters of Mordecai and Esther establishing the
holiday of Purim* 77
- Letters of Mordecai in defense of the Jews* 77
- Letters of Shemiah to the people in Jerusalem
and the priests* 77
- Letters of the Babylonian king Merdouch-
baladan to Hezekiah* 77
- Lost books cited in 1–2 Chronicles* 74–77
- Midrash of the Book of Kings* 92
- Midrash of the Prophet Iddo* 75, 92
- Oracles of Balaam* 79
- Prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite* 75, 91
- Royal correspondence about the Jewish exiles in
the Book of Ezra* 77
- Sapiential Works of Solomon* 69–71, 83
- Song of Deborah* 79
- Song of Hannah* 79
- Song of Moses* 79
- Song of the Ark* 79
- Song of the Sea* 79
- Testament of Jacob* 79
- Visions of Jeddo the Visionary Concerning
Jeroboam Son of Nebat* 75, 91
- Vision of Isaiah Son of Amoz the Prohet* 76
- Words (or Acts) of the Visionaries* 75–76
- Words (or Acts) of Jehu Son of Hanani* 75–76
- Writings of David and Solomon on the Divisions
of the Levites* 93
- 2 Baruch**
- | | |
|--------|-------------|
| 6:56 | 106, 109 |
| 78–87 | 103 |
| 78:1–9 | 105 |
| 82:1 | 104 |
| 82:1–9 | 105–106 |
| 82:4–5 | 95, 103–105 |
- 2 Enoch**
- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 71:32–33 | 115 |
|----------|-----|
- 4 Ezra**
- | | |
|---------|--------------|
| 3:28–36 | 108 |
| 4:22–25 | 108 |
| 5:28–29 | 108 |
| 6:38–59 | 106–107 |
| 6:55–59 | 108, 109 |
| 6:56 | 95, 107, 109 |
| 9:16 | 95 |
- Apocalypse of Abraham**
- | | |
|----|-----|
| 13 | 129 |
|----|-----|
- Ascension of Isaiah**
- | | |
|----------|-----|
| 9:16 | 305 |
| 11:22–33 | 305 |
- Jubilees**
- | | |
|----------|---------|
| 12:12–15 | 127 |
| 17 | 132–133 |
| 17:15 | 132 |

18:11–12	133
18:11	133
18:15–16	129
19:3–8	127, 138, 139n53
19:9	129
23:10	129, 138
24:11	129
31	120

Sibylline Oracles

2.196	261n4
3–5	269
3	264
3.11–20	152n35
3.24–25	275
3.97–105	263n12, 264
3.97–104	267
3.105	267
3.108–113	263
3.721–723	275
3.809–810	267
4.4–7	272
4.24–30	275

Dead Sea Scrolls

1QapGen	117
1QapGen xxii:13–17	114
1QIsa ^a xxxiii, 15	96
4QSam ^b	35n56, 36n61
4Q225	133
4Q242	141–153
4Q381 33	77n23
4Q403 1 11:21	116n14

Ancient Jewish and Rabbinic Literature**Avoth de-R. Nathan (A)**

7	130
---	-----

Avoth de-R. Nathan (B)

1 33	134
------	-----

B. Baba Bathra

15a–b	129
15b	130n19, 131–132, 139
16a	130n19, 130n21

4.28–30	275
5.294–296	272
5.483–487	272
8.5	264, 267
frag. i	264, 268–270, 275–276
frag. ii	264–265
frag. iii	264, 268

Testament of Abraham

1:2	128
1:6	128
2:2, 3	128
4:7	128
8:2, 4	128
9:7	128
15:12–15	128
16:9	128
20:14	128

Testament of Job

1:6	126
1:27	131
5:2	127

4Q405 8–9:5–6	116n14
4Q427 7 11 6	149n29
4Q504 1 11 7–12	151
4Q547 6:3	144n10
11Q5 24:3–16	151
11Q10 38:2–3	144n10, 148
11Q13	116–117, 119–120

B. Ned.

41a	149n30
-----	--------

B. Meg.

17b	149n30
-----	--------

B. Sanh.

18d	178n32
89b	132n26, 134

B. Sota.

31a 130n18, 131n24

Damascus Document

3:2–3 129
8:4 149n29

Deut. Rab.

11:3 130

Gen. Rab.

19:2 130n21
49:17 130n21
54:7 134
55:4 132n26
56:4 134n34
61 130n18

Josephus*Antiquities of the Jews*

1:208 149n29
1.180–181 114
5:31 42
8:335–343 152n35
9:18–20 147n23, 149n29

Contra Apionem

2.137 243n2

Jewish War

6.483 116

Letter of Aristaeas

150 248n16
233 149n29

M. Avoth

5:3 130n18

M. 'Eduyot

2:10 130n19

M. Sota

5:5 130–131, 139

Mekhilta ba-Hodesh

10 130n19

Mek. Exod.

14:15 130n18

Midrash Tanhuma Wa-Yishlah

8 131

Midrash Tehillim

26:2 130n19

Mishna Shabbat

9:1 255n29

Num. Rab.

17:2 134

Pesiqta Rabbathi

43:7 131

Philo*De specialibus legibus*

1:229 121
3:82 152n35
4.100–101 248n15
4.106–107 248n16

Life of Moses

1:158 121

On the Embassy to Gaius

3:79–82 116

Plutarch*Quest. Conv.*

4, 4.4–6.2 243n2

Pseudo-Eupolemos

[Eusebius, *Praep. euan.* 9.17.6]

114

Pseudo-Philo*Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*

6–7 99
6:3 100
6:11 100
7:2 100n17
7:3 94, 99–101, 109, 111
7:3–4 100
8:8 126
11:6 100n17
12 100
12:3 100n17
12:4 94, 99, 101–103, 109–110
12:9–10 151
19:15 95

32:4	133n31	Tan. B. Ve-yera	
44:6–8	102	42	132n26
Semahot		Targum Isaiah	
8	130n19	40:15	96
Sifre Deut.		Targum of Job	
32	130n19	2:9	126n8
		20:19	126n8
Sifre Num.		Targum Pseudo-Jonathan	
112	130n19	15:6	127, 130
T. Gad		Tosefta Shabbat	
5:9–11	149n29	13:2	130n19
T. Levi		Y. Ber.	
6:7	149n29	9:14b	130n18
T. Reu.		14b	130
1:7–8	149n29	Y. Sota.	
T. Sota		5:20b	130n18
6:1	131, 139n53	20b	131n24
T. Zeb.			
5:2–4	149n29		

New Testament

Matthew		15:34	318
9:1–8	141	16:19–20	300
15:11	244	Luke	
17:9	172n14	1:70	170
18	162	4	162
27:46	318	5:17–26	141
28:20	172n14	23:46	317
Mark		24:50–52	297
1:5	162	24:51	300
2	148	John	
2:1–12	141–142, 149–153	13:37	173n16
6:2	181n42	13:35	172
7	161	14:15, 21	173n17
7:14–19	244	14:30	240
7:19	245n7	15:10	173n17
11:25	151	15:12	173n16
12:26	76n22	15:14, 17	172n14
14:58	61n37		

John (*cont.*)

20:17 300

Acts

1-3 165
 1:2 172n14
 1:9-11 297
 1:11 307
 2:33 302
 2:34-35 300
 3 161-162
 3:21 170
 4 161-162
 5 160-163, 166
 7:48 62n37
 9 316
 10 245n7
 13-28 297n1
 15:23 176n26
 17:26 62n37
 19:26 52

Romans

6 207
 6:4-7 212
 7:18 204
 8 207, 210
 8:17 212
 11:2 76n22
 15:20 250
 21:25 250

1 Corinthians

7:5 124
 7:23 176n28
 8-10 250-251
 8:7-10 251
 10:13 124
 12 317
 12:3 181n40
 14:37 173
 15 204, 207, 210, 214
 15:15 181n40
 15:42-54 204
 15:42-44 208
 15:44 203n15, 204
 15:45 204
 15:40 208
 15:42-44 208

15:50 209n40

15:51-55 211

15:51-54 210

15:54 205

2 Corinthians

3:6 204, 245
 4:14 211
 4:16 204n17
 5 180
 5:1 62n37
 5:1-8 209n41
 5:4 180, 204n17, 205
 5:6-8 209
 5:8-9 210n42
 5:10 209
 5:19 240
 14:37 173

Galatians

2 60
 2:9 181n40
 3:19-4:10 57-59
 3:27 212
 4 58n27
 4:3 59
 4:4 165
 4:8-10 57-58
 4:8 53, 55
 4:10 53, 59-60
 6:15 59

Ephesians

1:10 165, 230-231, 236
 1:13-14 214
 1:22-23 230
 2:5-6 211, 213
 2:6 212
 2:11 53, 61-62
 3:2 181n42
 3:5 170n7
 3:9 181n42
 4:30 214
 5 165
 6:12 124

Colossians

1:15 231
 1:24-2:5 178

1:25	181n42	7:21	112
2-3	207	7:24	112
2	54, 58n27	8:5	112
2:11	53, 61-62	9:10	112
2:12	211	9:11	61n37
2:16	60	9:23	112
4	53	9:24	61n37, 112
1Thessalonians		James	
4:15-18	210n42	1:11	138
4:15-17	211	1:2-4, 12	138
4:16	206	1:2	137
5:2	168n2	1:2-14	136
		1:3-4	135
		1:12-14	135
2Thessalonians		1:12	139
1:6-10	184, 189, 191, 193-	1:13	137-138
	197	1:14	136-137, 139-140
2:7-8	196	1:15	140
		1:16-18	135
1Timothy		1:17	139
3:2	164n9	1:19	139
6:14	173	1:21-24	139
6:16	239	1:27	139
		2:2-16	139
2Timothy		2:21-23	137
2:17	212n48	2:21	136
		2:50	139n53
Titus		3:1-10	139
1:6	164n9	4:5-7	140
		5:2	138n49
Philemon		5:7-12	138
1	182	5:9, 12	139
1:20-24	209n41	5:11	136
1:21-23	213	5:13-16	139
1:22-23	209		
3:20-21	207, 209-210		
Hebrews		1Peter	
1:13	112	1:1-2	175
2:5-10:5	236-237	1:1	176
2:5-9	236	1:2	177
2:9	239	2:11	178n34
5-10	112	3:2	305
5:5	112	5:1-2	178n34
7-9	112	5:1	178n32
7:1	114	5:12-14	178
7:3	112, 115, 121	5:12-13	175
7:11	112, 122		
7:16	112		

2Peter

1:1	176, 183
1:3–15	179
1:13–14	180
1:15–18	178
1:18	170n5
2:1	171
2:21	170n5, 172, 173n17
3:1–2	169
3:1	167, 175
3:2	168–169, 172–174
3:3–4	170
3:3	180n36
3:10	168n2
3:11	170n5
3:15–16	169
3:15	177n29
3:16	167
3:17–18	181

Early and Late Antique Christianity**1Clement**

5:5, 6	138
10:1	129–130
13:3	174n20
17:2	127
34:8	138
36:5	300

Acts of Pilate

14:1	306
16:6	306

Ambrose*Letters*

35	43n6
----	------

Amphilochius of Iconium

Against the Heretics 255n30

Aphrahat*Demonstrations*

15	246n12, 248n12
----	----------------

1John

2:3, 4	173n17
2:7–11	173n16
3:22, 24	173n17
3:23	173n16
4:21	173n16
5:2	173n17

2John

1:4–6	173n16
6	173n17

Jude

17–18	170
17	172
18	180n36

Revelation

18:2	250n19
------	--------

Aristides*Apology*

2	301
15	252

Apostolic Constitutions

7.39.3	114
8.12.23	114

Athanasius of Alexandria*Festal Letters*

7.2	248n16
-----	--------

Athenagoras of Athens*Legatio sive supplicatio pro Christianis*

30.1	263
------	-----

Augustine*Contra Faustum*

3.14	247
16.30	248n16
32.15	255n30

De gratia et libero arbitrio

3.16	196–197
------	---------

Expositions on the Psalms

4.303–304	317
-----------	-----

Caesarius of Arles*Sermons*

199:5	43n4
-------	------

Clement of Alexandria*Paedagogus*

2.1	248n15, 254
2.10.98.3	269–270
3.3.15.2	269
3.11	248n16

Protrepticus

4.50.1–3	271
6.70.1–2	273
6.71.4	269, 273
8.77.2	272

Stromateis

1.15.70	269–270
1.21.108	269, 273
1.21.132	269–270
2.45.4	298n5
3.3.14.3	270–271
3.26.3	298n5
5.51–52	248n16
5.15.115.2, 6	270
6.5.40.1	271
7.82.1	298n5
7.109.3	248n16

Didache

1:5	174n20
2:1	174n20
4:13	174n20
6:3	251–252
13:5, 7	174n20

Didascalia Apostolorum

26	246, 248
----	----------

Diogenes Laertius*Lives*

X, 14	176n25
-------	--------

**Disputation of Sergius the Stylite
against a Jew**

13–20	247n12
-------	--------

Ephrem of Syria*Hymns on Paradise*

13.12–13	43n5
----------	------

Epiphanius*Panarion*

30.22.6–10	245n7
------------	-------

Epistle of Barnabas

10	248n16
15:9	300–301
16:9	174n20
19:2–3	174n20

Epistle of Polycarp

2:1	300
-----	-----

Epistle of Rheginos (NHC I, 4)

43–45:39	206
45:14–23	205
45:24–40	211
45:24–28	212
45:34–39	213
45:34–35	211
45:36–38	204
45:39–46:2	201–204, 214
45:39	209
46:7	206
46:14–17	211
46:19	206
47:4–8	203–204
47:17–19	202
47:30–48:1	211
47:34–45	202
47:38–48.1	202
48:2–6	202
48:3–11	203n14
48:12–16	202
48:13–19	208
48:27–28	208
48:34–38	202
48:38–49:7	205
49:1–5	202
49:9	207, 214
49:11–16	211
49:11–12	202
49:15–16	202
49:16	212
49:22–30	213
49:33–36	202, 207
49:35	207

Epistle of the Apostles

5¹ 300–301, 306

Epistle to Diognetus

4.2 246n12

Eusebius of Caesarea

Hist. Eccl.

4.18.4 274n43

5.20 299n16

Gospel of Nicodemus

17.1 300

Gospel of Peter

9:35–39 301

56 300

Hesychius of Jerusalem

Commentary on Leviticus

246nn1

Ignatius of Antioch

Phld.

5:2 171

Smyr.

3:3 300

Irenaeus

Against Heresies

1.6.3 253

1.24.5 253n27

3.1.1–11 398n8

3.4 299n16

3.11.7 398n10

3:21.10 232

4:14.1 235

4:24.1 234

4:26.1 235

4:27 233

4:10.2 233

4:43–45 194–195

5:3 130n18

5:8.3 248n16

5:20.2 234–235

5:21.1 232–233

5:33.13 239

7:2 130n18

Isodad de Merv

Commentary on Leviticus

11 248n14

Jerome

Commentary on Matthew

15.11 253, 255n30

15.12 243n1

John Chrysostom

Homily on 1 Corinthians

25 255n30

Homily on 1 Timothy

12 246nn11, 255n30

Homily on Genesis

27.16 251n22

Homily on Hebrews

4:2–3 240

Homily on Titus

3 246nn1

Justin Martyr

Dialogue with Trypho

20 246nn11, 248n14

32.3 171n9

35 253

36.5 260

56.5 171n9

82.1 171

Apologies

I 16, 26 260

I 20.1 261–262

I 20.4 261

I 21 262

I 32.3 171n9

I 44 262

I 44.1 171n9

I 44.8 262

I 44.10 262

I 44.11 262–263

I 44.12 261–263

I 44.13 263

I 50 303

I 53.6 171n9

Lactantius

Divine Institutes

4.17.18–21 248n16

Methodius*De cibis judaïcis*

- 7 245n7, 248n12
8 246

Nicetas of Heraclea*Catena of John* 216–224**Novatian***De cibis judaïcis*

- 2 246
3 248n16
5 255n30

De Trinitate

- 11 303
11.8 300

Origen*Commentary on Job* 127*Commentary on John*

- 1.255 239
2.123 239
28.154 239
32.354 240

Commentary on Matthew

- 11.12 245n7, 255–256

Commentary on Romans

- 9.42.8 245, 256–257

Contra Celsum

- 5.49 248–249
8.28–30 255

Dialogue with Heraclides

- 27 239

Homilies on Leviticus

- 7.6–7 248n16

Homilies on Numbers

- 7.4.3 102n19
16.7.13 249n17

Procopius of Gaza*Commentaries on the Octateuch*

- 245n7, 248n14

Pseudo-Clement*Homilies*

- 7.8.1 258n33
8.19 258

- 8.23 258n33

- 9.23 258n33

Recognitions

- 4.36.4 258

Pseudo-Ephrem*Commentary on Leviticus*

- 11 248n14

Pseudo-Justin Martyr*Cohortatio ad Graecos*

- 16.1 274–275
16.5–7 275n44
37.1 275–276
37.3 276
38.1 275n44, 276
38.2 276

Tertullian*Apology*

- 9.13 251n22

Contra Marcionem

- 2.20.1 248n15
5.16 195–196

On Fasting

- 5 248n15

Testament of Benjamin

- 9:3 300–301

Theodore Bar Koni*Book of the Scholia*

- 3.41 248n14

Theodore of Cyr*Questions on Leviticus*

- 11 248n16

Theodore of Mopsuestia*Catechetical Homily* 241*Questions on Leviticus*

- 11 245n7

Victorinus of Pettau*Commentary on Revelations*

- 2.6 253n27

Classical Literature

Aristotle

Frag. 133 232

Dionysius of Halicarnassus

Lysias

9 232

Herodotus

Historiae

1.32 41

Homer

Odyssey

18.130 271

Petronius

Satyricon

48.8 276n47

Plutarch

Parallela Minora

308e 33n50

310c 33n50

Pseudo-Philo

Bib Ant.

43.7 42–43

Theophilus of Antioch

To Autolytus

1.14 171nn1

2.3 264–265

2.9 264–268

2.10 272

2.10–32 265

2.10 266

2.31 263nn2, 264, 266–

268

2.35 268

2.36 264, 268

2.36.1–6 275n46

2.37 268

2.32–24 171nn1

3.17 171nn1